A. Starker Leopold

No T.P.

Sorenson Ranch - Liberty Island Road

Oct. 22, 1966 BSL, EWL 12 pintail

Opening day and Betty and I held down the no. 5 blind where I recently had another barrel installed making it a double. For several weeks the Sorenson property has held a vast cloud of spring, variously estimated as from 10 to 20 thousand. Today with the beginning of shooting they milled around for several hours until practically everyone had his full quota of shooting. We certainly had ours. After a slow start Betty took 5 each spring, one string of 4 straight.

I would judge 95% of the birds seen today were spring, with a few widgeon, mallards, and teal (green-wings mainly).

There was scarcely any breeze and the birds were mostly just passing no. 5 - no strong indications of decoying to us, though they were piling in to some of the other sets. With a strong E wind I am hopeful that no 5 will have more positive attraction.

Oct 23, 1966 BSL 7 pintail

Both Betty have yesterday mid-day, returned alone early this morning and went again to no 5. Vic in no 6, Ed in double 2. They

Oct. 23, 1966 (cont.)
both limited while I had shot only 3 shells.
This morning there was a light but definite
N breeze and that essentially puts no 5 out
of business. I finally moved to no. 6 to finish
my limit.

There were a lot more widgeon in the air
today, more teal and a few shovelers. Still
scarcely any mallards and only an odd goose
or two.

Oct. 29, 1966 BSL HBG 1 mallard, 4 pintail, 1 widgeon

Calm, sunny, warm — but a fair flight in spite
of all that. Had only one going first two hours but
birds worked in better toward mid-morning and
picked up 5 more in an hour. Stayed with #2 double.

There were a lot more widgeon, teal, and shovelers
in air than a week ago. Also several flocks of
canvasback and a group of three redheads. No
geese yet.

In afternoon went after pheasants with Bill
Colby and the Balsam gang. Plenty of birds in
unharvested weedy kopje up near the pumps.
I took 5 and could easily have had more. Average
take was about 4 birds per gun.

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Oct 30, 1966 BR #6 1 spring

Ted took the double for his first choice, I took no 6 and Vic no. 1. Scarcely any action at all and we each ended up with a spring apiece. Calm warm weather and birds stayed high after yesterdays shooting.

Short pheasant hunt in afternoon and I took one more which was all I wanted, giving me 6 to take home.

Hunting Journal of A. Starker Leopold

Sept 1, 1967 Marysville

Woody and I stayed with Cole & Flo Haskell at the ranch south of Marysville and shot doves both Sept. 1 (Friday) and Sept 2 in an oak grove east of Marysville a few miles toward Beale Air Base. Doves fed in wheat stubbles around the grove but contained mostly turkey mullein seeds produced by plants that grew after wheat harvest. Tremendous numbers of birds both days and limits of 12 each all around.

BR - 24 doves

Sept 30 - Oct 1, 1967 Jarlock

Betty and I visited Jarlock for week end of doves at invitation of Ed Channing. Shot first day in a cut corn field in which thousands of doves had gathered to eat weed seeds produced under the corn or along field borders - pig weed, foxtail, Sunflower.

Did shoot first day but on Sunday the birds were gone - burned out completely by one day of bombardment. Scratched out a few in various fields.

BR - 16 doves

Oct 7-8, 1967 — New Fallon, Nev.

Mike Pontrelli assembled a foursome to greet the duck & snipe opening in Nevada. A three-day non-resident license cost me only $10.00 incidentally. A flooded pasture south of Stillwater reserve a few miles was loaded with birds first morning. In midst of enormous bombardment by several dozen of hunters I got a limit of mallards and spring within trouble in an hour. Cooked teal for lunch, wrapped in aluminum foil, stuffed with apple & onion, & spices. Simply delicious! Killed a few jacksnipe in afternoon while the boys filled their limits.

On Sunday the ducks had vanished, like the doves last week at Imlock. We had a fine snipe shoot however, killing 42 between us.

BR - 3 mallard, 3 spring, 15 w teal, 11 snipe.

Oct 14, 1967 — Sorenson #5

Betty and I occupied #5 barrels to open the Calif. duck season. A heavy north wind kept the birds milling and we took limits of straight spring day & bag. One of the best duck shoots and most dramatic shows in years. The sky was full of spring all morning — shell flying when we left with birds all cleaned. Saw 4 snipe.

BR - 6 spring EW - 6 spring

Oct. 15, 1967 Season #2

On assumption that yesterdays fine flight would continue, I took Hing Weber back to the duck pond and chose the #2 double. This was the worst choice I could have made. Even yesterday when we had such a flight, Jed and Bill Betten didn't fill out in #2 until mid-morning. That blind is not much good in a north wind. No 1 would have been best and no-one shot there. No 6 was next. A guest of Bill's got 5 good ducks in #4 during shoot morning. Hing and I ended up west & birds, getting at noon. Saw 5 snipe.

BR - 5 spring, 1 widgeon

Oct 21 Season #5

Fine South wind today and the birds worked perfectly for no. 5. I shot very well and had my six spring before 8 o'clock. Everyone on the pond got shooting but I had the best. My respect for the Cinderella blind is going up steadily.

Saw hardly any geese, 11 snipe

BR - 6 spring (1 banded - 716-50513)

(The above bird was banded at Alta, Ontario August 8, 1967)

Oct 23, 1967 — Missoula, Mont.

Arrived Missoula last night and spent morning with Dick Zeber and Bob Hoffman going over plans for their Institute of Nat. Resources. In afternoon went out with Phil Wright and Bob Wallace hunting ruffed grouse. Up a side canyon some 30 mi. SW of Missoula we found a dozen and a half birds and bagged four between us. Wallace has a fine pointer that is superb on grouse. They say it is too late in fall for blue grouse — they are up in the trees already.

BR — 2 ruffed grouse

Oct 24 — Red Bison Range

Dick T. took me to the National Bison Range for a brief visit. Visited Jocko Creek for an hour without success. Had lunch with Don Mazoni, Refuge Manager. After lunch we spent afternoon going shooting mallards on Missouri Creek just N of the refuge fence. Only jumped about a dozen ducks in all but we got five of them.

Shot at three nice cocks of Hungarian and a dozen pheasants, mostly roosters. Upland game very next week.

BR — 4 mallards

Oct 28, 1967 — Sorenson #5

Another good N wind and I chose #1, Ted going into #6. The action was here a week ago but not today. At 8:15 I went by #6 where Ted had two spring. I still had nothing, shot only one shell in #1. Moved into no. 5 and killed six birds in half an hour! Everyone & the East end was having a fine shoot, with limits of spring and quite a few mallard. We were off the flight line to the west. Saw 15 snipe.

BR - 2 spring, 1 mallard, 3 g-w teal

Nov 4, 1967 — Elkhorn Club #81

Shot with Bill Colby in Elkhorn first choice blind. Very slow for first two hours or so then we began to get sporadic action. Ended up at 11:15 with limits of big birds. One of mine proved to be a ♀ hybrid pintail/mallard. Turned it over to ward for MVZ specimen.

Hunted pheasants in afternoon, this being opening day of Valsac. We all got 4 & 6 birds apiece they were abundant everywhere it seemed — in corn, brush, ditches, Sacramento. Little Monty tagged along — not clear what was going on. Saw 21 snipe

BR - 6 spring, 4 pheasants (1 banded)

Nov 11, 1967 Swenson, Balsac

Estella Leopold and I returned to Berkeley from the Fire Ecology Conference at Hoberg. Too lazy to get up for duckn so we came up mid-morning Saturday for a pheasant walk and picnic. Left Betty in #5 blind west Bettens pond — she didn't get a shot. Old Vic Petri shot the pond all along and killed one spnig only. Poor shooting elsewhere around Swensons and Elsa.

Estella and I hunted pheasants 10 to 12 hrs on the Sacramento pond. Found a big concentration of wild birds (unbanded) in the NE corner of the old pond where Bil and I got with them a week ago (along the willow ditch). I took a pair of birds and lost a wing-tipped cripple that ran away through water — Jaco couldn't trail. Both young birds. Estella fired a shot at a big rooster cutting a tight fast circle around her. I guess we jumped 40 birds.

On the little open water pond we put out 25 mixed ducks (mostly teal) and I took one long shot, dropping a big drake Gadwall that Jaco caught up with. Had lunch at parking lot beside Bettens pond — Saw mallards alight in pasture for to the west. Sneaked then and put out 25 or so, of which I took one hen — later also a teal. Saw 9 snipe.

BR - 2 pheasants, 1 mallard, 1 Gadwall, 1 teal (5-N)

Nov 15, 1967 — Sorenson, Utah

Made the mistake of taking Betty up to shoot #5 blind on the first of days. Few ducks moving working in. One bag — 1 teal.

I left blind a little after 8:00 and joined the gang from Valsac for a hunt. Mostly hunted with Sid around the hayfield. Bag 2 cock pheasants. Young Monty ran hard all morning — still in dark as to purpose of the hunt.

Kill — 15-w teal, 2 pheasants. Saw 4 snipe.

Nov 18, 1967

Had dinner Friday night at Elks Club with Norrie Cox, Alan Starr and Bill Colby. In morning I shot no 5 on West Bottom pond. Some better than Wednesday — I had ten chances & shot, took 2 snipe and a widgeon. Also 1 snipe — Season opened today.

General pheasant season opened today so we hunted on Elks. Sid and I hunted hard for three hours in mid-day before getting our two cocks apiece. The big event was Monty's sudden coming into his own. He flash pointed a cock and I knocked it down crippled on edge of an uncut hayfield. Monty followed it into cane at full tilt. I found the dog 15 min. later dashing around in the cane trying to relocate the cock.

But there was evidence of a massive battle between the dog and the rooster — feathers scattered along 50 yards of one cane row including the whole tail and several wing secondaries! The pup obviously was excited and bold but didn't know how to grab the body.

Five minutes later, near the end, he made a magnificent solid point on a rooster. A great day!

2 spring, 1 widgeon, 1 snipe, 2 cock pheasants.
Saw 26 snipe.

Nov 19, 1967

Poor duck shoot, I sat in #4 barrel which turned out to be trimmed in RAGWEED. I was in a state of blisters by the time I left, with 1 shoveler to show for my effort — the only bird to come near the blind.

On the Elbe came, Ng Balrac, Monty immediately started making points in the cut cane. I took two cocks over his points and there were several more hens. Inco generally beats him to the retrieve but he is finding the birds away ahead of us and holding them, so far. He sure has the speed, stamina, nose, and pointing instinct to be a great dog. Up to me now to train him. Saw 14 snipe.

1 shoveler, 2 cock pheasants.

1 cock spring pecked up by Inco

Nov. 22, 1967 Simson, Balsac

I took the #2 double. Weather clear, crispy, and good N breeze. Tremendous mass of geese and Spruce come off progressively as people went to their blinds. Birds worked #6 but early, but as morning wore on more action occurred at no 2. At nine Jr I made a double on cock Spruce giving me a full bag of six, all fat cocks. Magnificent string.

I went pheasant hunting alone in pastures N of Sheasants pond. Monty made help a dozen jumps but I didn't quite get in for a kill, though I two nice cock birds. I got my two roosters however. Nat Sis bladding coming out and we had a short hunt in uncut cane in front of the Balsac trailer. Killed another cock and two hens. Very pleasant little caper.

Saw 25 snipe, some in bunches of 5 or so suggesting new arrivals. Bill Harp shot a couple near #5 blind where he shot. He went into #4 first but said there was great action over 5 for half hour after daylight. He moved over but a little too late. Blinds 2 and 6 were definitely best today. Old Vic Petri in no. 1 had only a little shooting, took two birds.

Bag- 6 fat cock Spruce
2 cock and 1 hen pheasant

Hunting Journal 1968 season

Clyde Creek Ranch, Red Bluff — BR 10 dover

Sept 1, 1968

Ray Barnett took me out for dover after we spent yesterday inspecting his field study of feral hogs.

A heavy and unseasonable rain a week ago had started most of the dove south but there were still enough kept to find a limit. We hunted the grassland strip just below the blue oaks, where wild hogs had rooted out the shallow swales for Brodea bulbs. Bare soil there exposed grass turkey mullein, and here the dover came in by the scores, if not hundreds. No cover for firing shooting but we had enough on foot and at a water seep to piece out our bids.

When Ray set out afoot to retrieve the car parked on the road a mile below, I sought a shady log to clean my dover. I was just about ready to sit down when I noticed a pretty good sized rattler coiled on the log under my projected fanny.

Band no 803-83064, mourning dove, was attached near Dairyville Cal 8/19/68, by CF&G personnel.

Oct 19, 1968 DSL EWL Swenson

Opening day found Betty and me in our No. 5 double, watching a cloudless, glassy-still dawn. Plenty of spring in the country but they flew high and had little interest in decoys. When Vic quit No 6 about 5:30 with a limit of spring, I moved in. At that time Betty and I had two birds. She got another at #5 and I took three more at #6, giving us six in all (3 spring, 15-a teal, 1 cin. teal, 1 shov.).

The flight seemed to be over 90% spring, with a few teal, widgeon, and shovelers. Saw less than a dozen mallards, three ring-necks.

Usual interesting assortment of shore birds, including quite a number of black-bellied plovers. Only had a dozen snipe.

6 ducks

Oct 23, 1968 DSL

Another clear still day, with a light flight continuing until nearly noon. Took 3 spring and a widgeon in No. 5 blind.

Big migration of snipe - saw about 30+, one bunch of 20.

4 ducks

Oct 26, 1968 BSL

Started in No. 5 but a north breeze sprung up and I was completely out of the shooting. After Ted hunted in #2 double I moved over there and filled out with 5 spring and a mallard. No. 1 would have been a fine shoot. Tic only did fairly in No. 6 (4 birds)

Jeo made one classy blind retrieve — all the way from no. 2 to the N levee — nearly 300 yds. I think he got a whiff of scent from the north.

Again a good batch of snipe on hand — probably 25 or so that I saw pass. They kept jumping in front of marsh hawks.

6 ducks

Nov 2, 1968 warm BSL

Took #2 double on first drive and it proved to be the poorest blind on the marsh. Heavy rain fell all morning, tapering off about 9:30 AM. A strong SE wind began to blow and ducks coming up the slot tended to swing toward No. 6, 5, or 4 but not no. 2. We got 6 ducks finally (4 spring, 1 gw teal, 1 shov.) by dint of good dog work on scaling cripples.

Then went for pheasants in Sacramento pond. Lots of birds — 4 of us got 13 with no trouble. Monty ran off wild and never hunted with us. Saw 40+ snipe.

6 ducks
BSL — 3 ph.

Nov 9, 1968 BR

Went into No. 5 blind and watched a thin flight wending through the fog. Scaled one widgeon over to 2d in No. 4 but otherwise no shooting. Besides fog there were few birds in the country.

Hunted pheasants in Sacramento pond and pasture north, there, trying to calm down young Monty. But he wouldn't stay in the same pasture with me, even after he got pretty tired. Made and held one nice point and retrieved the bird when I killed it. But he broke 6 or 8 more points before I could reach him. I'm afraid he's more dog than I can handle.

64 snipe seen. 1 spnj, 1 widgeon
3 pheasants

Nov. 10

Much flight even lighter than yesterday and the fog was heavier. Killed one high spnj and a spoony in No 5.

Didn't go for pheasants. Came home early

2 ducks

Jackrope Seen
1968

Sorenson's

1967

1968

Swipes seen per hour

60

45

30

15

64

40

30

25

6

14

100+

63

93

90

64

45

47

32

Objects Nov 24, 1968

20 24 28 12 6 10 14 18 22 26 30 2 6 10 14 18 22 26 30 2 6 10 12

Oct Nov. Dec

Nov. 16, 1968 DSt

Good N breeze at daylight so I took No. 1 after Ed had chosen no. 2. It was a mistake. Breeze let up and no birds came to N end of the pond so at 8 AM I moved to No. 5 with only one spaj down. Added 4 more in the next hours. Bill Harp took 5 birds also in No. 4. We were the only pond in the whole area that got any decent shooting.

Went to NE pasture with Ed Colby and took 5 pheasants over dog (Monty back in Reform School!). Good sedge cover up there.

32 Snipe seen. DSt 5 spaj
2 pheasants

Nov 20. 1968 DSt EWt

Light N breeze and deep but thin fog all morning. There were hundreds of spaj resting at #6 and some stayed for an hour or two of shooting. But flight was high and few birds really worked. Ed got 6 spaj in No 2 and Betty and I took 3 spaj and a teal in No. 5. Bill Harp shot #4 but kept early — bag unknown.

Remember flight of snipe today — counted 142 from blind, without counting birds jumped going in & out of blind.

4 ducks

Martin ranch, below Sonora

Nov 23, 1968 5 quail.

Mr. Martin gave permission to drive through the ranchyard and up the grassy valley, where we parked in dense fog. Hunted E, along the rim for a ways, then over the plateau to our old shooting ground "piney woods". Now paved highway to New Melones Dam goes by now. Failed to find the big covey and lost a small covey along rim. On way back to car jumped 60+ birds on the west rim and had some shooting but couldn't catch up with most, then in the very rough rocks and brush. First bird for A — a good cross shot coming out of oak.

After lunch went to brushy hill along W edge of Martin place, facing down on prison farm. Worked over one small bunch of 20+ there, adding two more birds. Fog lifted some but heavy overcast and wet grass made it hard to stop the birds from running.

Nov 24

Old Bill —, of rock quarry W of Martins, gave OK to hunt his place and adjoining Haddox ranch. Later Mrs. Haddox added her blessing. But in two hours saw only one small covey that escaped up a steep mountainside. No shots fired.

Good country though.

Sorensons BR 4 ducks
Nov 27, 1968 8 snipe

Went to no. 5 in the fog and had a few scratch shots early. Killed one spnig and sent three birds scaling off in the fog. Later went out with Jaco and picked up all three of them. Fog lifted at 10:30 BR but few birds came in — too late for a good flight.

Main thing today was a fine snipe shoot. In the fog I was gone shooting all morning and had 7 snipe by time I left the blind. Finished the limit walking out.

Returned after lunch with Lee Gladding and we took another limit of birds for him — mostly on our pond and partly at Little Joe's. In all we took 17 snipe today. I was shooting well, incidentally.

Fair number of geese in the country now, but not very many came down low. A few cacklers, lesser Canadas, and specs killed to date. Big increase in the widgeon population too. Likewise some more teal (g.w.). Saw the first counting practice of spnigs and killed one fine drake from such a party — full pin tail.

Didn't go pheasant hunting — too busy with the gadwsnipe. Saw over 100 snipe from the blind. 3 each spnigs, 1 g.w. teal.

Nov 30, 1968 BR D. Hawthorne 2 ducks
6 snipe

Put Vern in no. 2 and I took no. 5. Bill Harp was in no. 4.

Very calm, partly clear sky (few scattered clouds, becoming dense in PM). The duck flight was the poorest I have seen. Lots of birds flying very high (almost invisible) but few worked down to Sorenson property. I killed one teal and missed a couple of others. Vern got one each spring. I couldn't hit the snipe either — they fly very much faster and more erratically on a clear day like this — not like in the fog last Wednesday.

Woody came by at 10:30 so we quit the blinds and went for pheasants. In the corn we rolled out plenty of birds and Vern and I took four. Then I went for pheasants on the Sacramento. M. Doyle was chasing them about. He took four and I got three. There were perhaps 50 birds scattered about the puddles there. Also a few mallards but we didn't get any shots.

Today there seemed to be even more widgeon than last Wednesday. Bill Harp took two. I passed several early shots, which I repeated later. A couple of nice flocks of canvasback. Saw 63 snipe from blind.

BR — Charge 4 Valley pheasants.

(BR — 12 pheasants to date)

Missouri

Guest of Carl Noren and
Mo. Cons. Commission

Dec 4-9, 1968

Flew to St Louis and spent night in home of Commissioner Jim Tom Blair. Dec. 5 we flew to Poplar Bluff and had a fine grail hunt on a farm near there. Dec 6. hunted briefly near St. Louis and then drove to Jefferson City with Noren. In the two days I got a dozen bobwhites and thoroughly enjoyed the dog work.

Dec. 7 drove to Swan Lake with Ed Steyer, exec. officer of Mo. Wildlife Federation. Had nice mid-day hunt over Ed's fine pointers but didn't hurt the birds much.

At 3 pm Mike Milowski took us goose hunting on his farm just N of the federal refuge. Flight of honkers started out of refuge about 3:30 and many hunters worked Milo's big decoy spread (750 decoys). I got a fine big bird with my cylinder barrel and everyone else in the party killed his bird too (limit here is one). Spectacular to look up at honkers cupped tight and dropping into the spread. Next morning we tried geese again but there was no flight. Winston Milowski got the only goose. Hunted for grail around Milo's without luck.

Carl Noren drove me to Chillicothe where a Commission plane met me.

Sorenson Dec 14, 1968 DSR 2 each spring
2 each pheasants

Good south wind and intermittent light rain. I took no. 5 and Ted went to no. 4 but neither of us did much business. There were lots of teal, shoveler, and a good scatter of widgeon, down in our decoys, but spring didn't work us much. Saw a fine flock of 15+ canvasback and I had a shot at a pair and missed as usual — too fast for me. In the dark before shooting began there were lots of geese about our pond, but they departed.

Hunted pheasants in afternoon and found a good number of birds in Sacramento and the portion to north of there, despite the fact that Woody, Cox et ~~Wright~~ Colby had hunted there before lunch. Ted Kenney hunted as my guest and we took two birds each — both had some good dog work.

There was a magnificent migration of geese in the afternoon — mixed snow & spec — coming down valley in skein after skein. This clearly was an arrival & major proportion from the north. A few flocks of swans came in too. Spirits piled into Silvers pond all afternoon and air was full of courting parties when we left.

Charge DSR - 4 pheasants Saw 53 snipe (did not shoot today)

Dec 17, 1968

15-w teal	HG
3 jacksnipe	
4 pheasants	

Good S wind, but for some reason the birds did not work our pond at all. Four blinds were occupied and the aggregate bag was 1 spnig (no 2) and one teal (no 5). We didn't even have a good look from the spoonies!

The snipe are still on hand — count from the #5 blind 50 +. I shot a few passing the blind after 9 AM.

Went for pheasants after lunch. Found plenty of birds scattered over the pastures N of Sacramento pond. Took two cocks and two hens over very good dog work (Jaco). An occasion to try Monty on these pastures. No snipe on the N pastures — did not really try the Sacramento pond.

Late afternoon the geese started pouring in to Gilmore pond, coming from the South (Suisun or Grizzly Island?). As we finished the pheasant hunt the birds were milling over the big ponds in hundreds. Nice view against the sunset. We stopped to watch until nearly dark.

Charge 4 pheasants & BR Valsan score.

Dec. 18 – 21, 1968

John McMillan, Shandon

Hunted three days with Jhe – first in Diablo range beyond the Homestead, second in piney woods toward west and which was spared the fire; third on Jhe's place over the hill by the Eucalyptus grove.

Very poor crop of birds this year. We bagged limits each day, but they went from 30 to young (piney woods) to 20 o. yng (Diablo), to no young on Jhe's place. According to Jhe's observation, the early crop of young came off exceptionally well but the late hatch, which he says usually supplies the crop, didn't come off at all. No apparent reason.

Jhe has a batch of new pups and no finished dogs at all

1) Barney – a 9 mo. pointer already hunting like a veteran, with speed, good nose, superb control
2) 5 setter pups 4 mo. old, out of Jeanie who is Monty's mother. They are behaving beautifully as regards basic obedience, and some of them (especially a little female "Gypsy") are hunting hard for quail and on the point of becoming real bird dogs.

Didn't jump a single chukar – not much of a hatch this year.

Dec. 26, 1968

Colusa

Got Monty back a day or so ago and took him, with Joco, for a full pheasant hunt in the pastures north of Sacramento.

He started out in good control and made a fine point which he held. Four hens jumped and I took one nicely, which Monty retrieved in his own sloppy fashion.

Thereafter Monty started running wildly, and for an hour he broke points and chased birds dragging a chain and 50 ft line with him.

From time to time he would hold a point but when the bird moved he would break — still no concept of reading in to hold a nervous pheasant. Finally late in the hunt he got so damn tired that he came back to hunt with us, but by then he was just trotting along, not really hunting. Still pretty questionable whether I can bring this dog in or not.

Magnificent geese show all day — two points of concentration — Round Dam so good and the main Gilmore. About half snows, half specs, a few hundred Canadas (hunters largely). Also a fantastic show of spring assuring quarters over the Gilmore pond.

3 Colusa pheasants

23 Colusa pheasants to date

BK - 2 ducks
1 Valley pheasant

Dec 28, 1968

Shot no. 5 blind again in a good S wind. Plenty of birds in the air but they didn't work our good very well. Ted Kennedy got two spring in no. 4 and I got a spring and a widgeon in no 5.

Snipe are still abundant — my count today was about 50. Didn't shoot any.

Hunted Valley pheasants. Monty was completely wild — never did hold a single point. I shot one hen.

6 Snipe
BK - 6 ducks
5 Valley pheas.

Jan 4, 1969

Adam Watson of Scotland left today and I returned to the duck marshes. Big widgeon flight but few spring on our pond. I took 5 cock widgeon and a teal. Sent them home with Woody, along with 5 valley pheasants and 6 jacksnipe; the snipe flight at my blind was good — but some lower than previously — about 65 count, #5 blind.

Monty started holding points and I took three birds over him. His retrieving is good when Jaco is competing for the bird.

Jan 5 1969

BK - 1 spring

Light flight at no. 5.

8 ducks
3 snipe
1 Valsac ph.

Jan 11, 1969

Gordy McPeak and I shot no. 5, and took 8 ducks — 2 spnj, 1 widgeon, 5 g-w teal. Also three jacksnipe out of a flight of 55 counted. Rainy most all day.

Spent two hours in midday picking up the decoys. Gordy and I did #4 and #5. Jed & Bill Hays did the other blinds

We went for pheasants late in afternoon but found very few in the N portion. Crippled a hen which was re-discovered and pointed nicely by Monty. No other shooting. Seemed as though the birds Monty pointed tended to sneak away — wouldn't hold in the wet grass.

1 brant
1 widgeon
1 snipe

Jan 12, 1969

Rain let up this morning but the wind let up too and birds flew pretty high. We had virtually no duck shooting on the pond. Whether lack of decoys was a factor we couldn't say.

I called a single Canada goose right into the blind and Gordy killed him nicely.

Snipe count today 47. I shot only once.

Went for Valsac pheasants and Gordy and I took three between us. Spitting rain part of the time and birds ran badly. Took one over a good point by Monty.

3 Valsac pheasants

33 Valsac ph. to date

Jan 15, 1969 Valsac - 6 pheasants

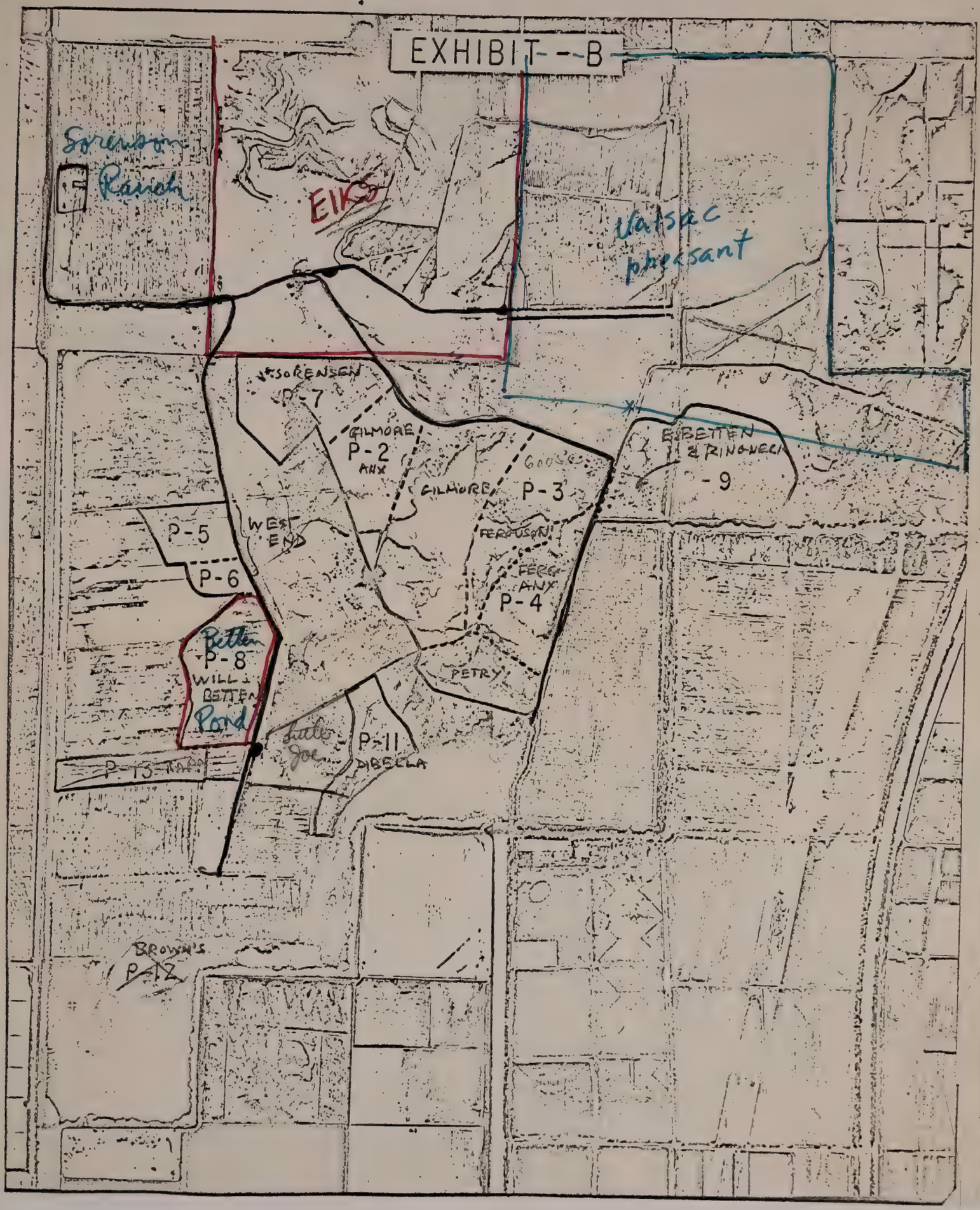
Crisp clear day - a dandy for ending the 1968-9 hunting season. I arrived about 10:30 AM and went out alone for a couple ½ hours. Took two hens and a rooster over Jacs (Monty as usual was miles away) in the north pasture and then spent much energy chasing three poachers out of the Sacramento area. Caught them at the SE corner, where they stood on the border of our property, leaning on a sign post, and coolly admitted they were poaching. The sportsman was "Farman" or something close to that - manager of the commercial club just east of us.

In PM went out with Les G., Morris Doyle, Nedley. Walked the ditches bordering corn fields and took only a dozen birds, then went into the pasture and Sacramento where everyone limited out - six birds apiece all around. Les' Gordon's Katy made many fine points Monty never did hold a point, nor did he come over to join our hunt.

Big cloud of geese working east of the Ship canal; very few ducks or geese right on our place. Water is rising in the by-pass and the birds probably are on flooded rice.

BB total pheasant kill Valsac - 39 birds

Parcel & Gravel Roads



Sorenson March 30, 1969

Picnic and inspection of the duck grounds after subsidence of the winter floods. The levees held as everything is in pretty good shape except a lot of E-W fences were grated over by the flood water loaded with debris.

No. 5 blinds intact with lids still in place. Slowly rising water apparently filled the boards without disturbing lids.

No migratory waterfowl in evidence - only paired mallards and cinnamon teal. Saw defense of territory by a drake mallard who rose to drive away intruding pair out of the country. Lots of jacksnipe still around, to my surprise (saw perhaps 40-50). A scattering of yellowlegs, pair of avocets, one curlew.

The web fences west of our pond toward the far slough and big levee were draped with a surprising number of goose carcasses - some ducks and coots, but mostly geese, coots and a few swans. Was this residue from a fowl cholera outbreak? Sure looked like it.

Big Sam the golden retriever had his first outing. Very suspicious of <u>water</u>, never did get in it.

Hunting - 1969 season

The McMillan Ranch, Shandon
Sept. 27-28, 1969

Betty and I came down to shoot a few doves and to select a setter puppy from the litter of five that she has been training. Unfortunately she was quite ill and couldn't hunt with us. She did come out for a bit on Sunday to show off the dogs.

Doves were surprisingly numerous for so late a date. Both mornings we shot at the water hole just over the ridge (South) from the ranch. First day there were a couple of hundred birds, second less than 100. Saturday evening we shot near the guzzler at the old farmstead. I would judge 300 or more doves came in just before dusk. In any event we came home with all the law allows. I shot particularly well — 11 birds for 13 shells on Sat. evening.

The little setters are a delight to watch. Most aggressive in the litter is the female, Dixie. I chose a male "Dig" for my dog. He and another male Hippie are both outstanding. Dig is the only one that likes water. He retrieves gaudily from a pond, which is an attribute that will be important to me. She wants to complete the training cycle. Will get the dog in a month or so!

BSc - 6 spnj
Can - 4 spnj
2 teal g.w.

Suisun
Oct. 18, 1969 Opening day

Betty ad I shot no. 5. Had plenty of action there despite light N breeze. This was the biggest spnj flight I remember for a good many years. Although #5 was still active I left it at 7:30 when Ted quit no. 2 with his limit. Within fifteen minutes I had my limit completed and came back to sit with Betty while she finished hers. Got the twelfth bird about 10:30 AM and had driven ad a picnic on the sunny ditch bank at the south end of the pond.

Six birds with 8 shells. Saw 4 jacksnipe.

Oct 19 BSc - 6 spnj

After taking Betty home ad having dinner in Berkeley, I drove back to the club. Ted Kerasoff ad I drank whiskey ad spun yarns for awhile before bed.

My first choice ad I took #2. Light north breeze ad still plenty of birds. I had my limit of six fat spnjs by 7:50. Picked up two scaling cripples which I left in pics car. Ted moved over to #2 when I left but the flight cut off sharply ad it was late morning before he completed his limit.

I got 7 birds with 12 shells. Saw 2 jacksnipe.

Bk - 6 spriz
Bk - 4 spriz, 1 widgeon
1 shoveler

Sorensons
Oct 22, 1969

When we went into #5 blind today there was a continuing roar of birds rising from the ponds. We had thousands of spriz ~~shot~~ for the night it seem.

Shooting started actively and for half an hour we had plenty of action. There was a slow period then of an hour or more as the low fog thickened. But as holes in the fog began to appear, and blue sky showed above, the high flyers worked down right over our decoys and we finished limits easily.

It a novice Bk shot well and connected on some good shots, ending with a limit. Can't beat that.

Curiously there were no cripples among the 12 birds downed. All were easy retrieves for Inco.

The duck population is still about 50% spriz — few mallard, widgeon, S-W teal and shoveler. Have only seen one cin. teal. No diving ducks and only a few high-flying scaup (specs).

Counted 21 geese/mig from the blind.

Sorenson 6 spnj

Oct 25, 1969

Again shot #5 and took another handsome limit of spnjs (5 cocks, 1 hen). There were few birds on the pond at daylight and a broken fog seemed to keep most of the flights high, but enough came down for some good shots. I made two doubles, which helped speed my limit.

Birds definitely decoyed to the no. 5 spread. Some spnjs came in the slight. I think I have a good looking and effective lay-out.

Nov 2, 1969 4 spnj
2 Valley pheasants

Took my class IDS 170 to Gray Lodge Refuge Saturday, Nov 1. Very few ducks there, a few hundred geese (speck), 100 or so Sandhill cranes. Stayed back at clubhouse for night and hunted ~~Saturday~~ Sunday AM. Weather clear hot and slight NE breeze. In no. 6. Ted had a good shoot. I had scant shooting in no. 2 double, but took 4 spnj. Kill over the whole property was pretty good considering the weather.

After lunch Gil Colby and I went out for pheasants. Took a brace apiece in 15 minutes. Saw 16 pheasants from #2 blind.

Penobscot Ranch 10 mi. S Auburn

Nov. 8-9, 1969

Had first quail hunt on Penobscot where I have bought a shooting membership. Elizabeth Hanna Seward leases the whole ranch from owner E. A. Long. She shares hunting with 5 other members. The 1800 acre ranch was cleared of timber for purpose of raising angora goats, but Mr. Long states coyotes got him out of business. Now he runs white-face cattle, very lightly stocked. Ranch is largely grass with brush patches scattered over the hills and in some gullies. Most brush is Ceanothus cuneatus or yerba Santa Eriodictyon californicum. Little poison oak, some heavy patches of live oak and Scotch broom. Scattered clumps of blackberry offer impregnable cover spots.

Upon advice of Elizabeth we took main black-top road East from Ranch to pond and started hunting north. Hit a covey in 200 yds, then two more bunches as we worked the scatter. All three bunches in the 30-40 range. Had 14 birds at lunch time. I got four, some good shots. After lunch scattered another bunch of equal size on hillslope just S of the pond. Shot poorly but added three more birds.

Next day (Sunday) we started on road South of the ranch headquarters to a barn along the W side of big lake, thence west past my a draw

Penobscot

Nov 8-9, 1969 (cont) to a point where the track crosses a boggy spring-run. Left car there by redwood snag and hunted west, big loop to south, and finally back to car at 12:30 PM. Hit only a few scatters for two hours (left from Elizabeth's hunt here yesterday) and didn't really get any shooting till we were approaching the car, completely exhausted. Then we hit two good bunches but shot badly, never did really catch up to them or scatter them. Added four birds to our week end bag, which tallied out as follows:

	Ad ♂	Ad ♀	Im ♂	Im ♀	
Nov. 8	3	—	8	6	= 17
Nov. 9	—	1	2	1	= 4
	3	1	10	7	= 21

Almost 50 percent young birds signifies a mighty good breed crop in 1969.

Stayed in Pine View Motel on edge of Georgetown. Their address is P.O. Box 167, Georgetown. Phone number 333-4359.

Red-tailed hawks are abundant. Saw Cooper hawks both days. On Sunday a cripple that I shot scaling across a canyon with big down wind pursued by a sharp-shin that caught up just as they approached ground behind some thick oaks. I presumed that the hawk made the kill.

Sycamore

BSc	{	2 spnj 4 mallards
GThcP	{	7 pheasants (Valsac)

Nov 12 Wednesday 1969

Brought Bordy McPeak out for a whirl at ducks and pheasants. We shot the no. 2 double but didn't do very well — came out with two cock spnjs. Late when we went to Sacramento pond to hunt pheasants we rigged a jinak on the pond and Woody & Jeff Riddlebarger drove 20 mallards right over us. Bordy and I each got doubles so our mallard score went up fast, and total duck string looked a bit better.

Lots of pheasants in the Sacramento and a fair scattering along the ditch banks between the ex-kapia fields. As a result of the unseasonably dry weather the ranch people have been able to combine, chop, and turn under all the kapia stubble so the former feeding areas for pheasants are nothing but barren fallow fields. I don't really know what pheasants and ducks will eat this winter since their "bare earth" policy applies throughout the Sacramento Valley — the rice stubbles as well as kapia.

Good bunch of snipe in south end of the pond but they were wild and we didn't get any. I guess we jumped 30+. Still no geese in view, nor any clear sign of newly arrived ducks.

The McM } 12 spring
Bre } 3 Valsac Pheasants

Sorrow

Nov. 15, 1969

The ad I sent back to No. 2 double. Good S wind that rattled all night died out at daylight. Slight ~~S~~ spring was high and our shooting was slow until about 8 or a little west breeze picked up. We then were in business and limited on spring in an hour or so. Still no geese, very few ducks other than spring.

After changing boots and eating a little of Joe's monstrous we set out for the pheasant range to try out my little setter on his first rooster. She brought Ring to me this week-end. He went right to work and made some good points and two fine retrieves on running cripples. No question that with a little experience he will be a truly great pheasant dog. He needs lots of experience - especially to master handling running birds.

This was Ike's first duck hunt in an organized club and his first real exposure to the ring-necked pheasant. I think he enjoyed the day enormously.

Not so many snipe visible today but this could have reflected purely local shifting about. Fair numbers of curlew, yellow legs and assorted Sandpipers.

Sonoma

Nov 16, 1969

BR } 3 pheasants
M } (Valdez)

Returned to the pheasant fields primarily to continue Dig's education. Mid-day was sunny and dry, and not very good for dog work, but little Dig looked great. We worked all the Sedge pastures N of Sonoma; two of the three have been mowed to remove sedge & green and stimulate grass and clover. Queried a lot of good cover.

Around late afternoon (3 PM) birds came out again in droves. BR had a bit of trouble timing shots but did get two birds.

Nov 22

BR 2 sprigs
1 cock pheasant

Chose no. 2 double but had very little shooting. Bagged a pair of sprigs and lost a cripple that scaled off to the west. Clear, still, good decoying on our pond.

Went for pheasants in the sedge field just East of our Bitter pond. Hunted the gopher alone, without Jack, and though he was very busy he didn't catch up with many birds. One big cock he did route out and made a nice retrieve.

Sorenson

Nov 23, 1969

#2 { 2 jacksnipe, 2 cock pheasants
#1 { 1 spring

Arrived back at ranch about 11 Am, after attending a night meeting in Berkeley. Again went to the Sedge area east of our duck pond and hunted it pretty thoroughly with #2 and both dogs. Jumped 6 roosters in all and had shooting at four of them. Some trouble again about #2 hitting. I knocked two down at once and enjoyed my first double retrieve - one to a dog! Picked up a fat cock spring that we saw crippled in Grand blind - scaled down near us. Also a couple of snipe on East of our pond.

Nov 26 — 1 spring, 4 cock pheasants

Again chose #2 double blind but had scant luck. Got one spring and quit to go pheasant hunting. After some lunch Ted Kennedy and I took our dogs to pastures of Sedge south of Butch Joe's ground. Found plenty of birds there and I took four nice cocks, Ted had three. This area is in a preserve so we had to have written permits.

Young dog ran wild most of the hunt and wasn't worth much. Had to whip him finally to get his attention.

Killed one young cock about half grown and just getting his rooster plumage.

Emerson

Nov. 29, 1969

Dk 1 g.w. teal
1 Cock pheasant

Foggy as London and absolutely no duck shooting. I finally shot one shell at a teal and got it. Left early and took young dog for a pheasant hunt. In the E edge I finally came on a great point, rooded backwards (over his shoulder) when I closed in and put out a big cock that was sneaking out behind us. Made a nice retrieve.

Pembroke Ranch Auburn Nov 29-30

Headed for the hills before mid-day and had a nice walk on Pembroke before dark — where we hunted first day by the cattail pond. Found two small coveys (both by dog — one on a classy point) and killed three birds.

Next morning early went back to hills south of the headquarters and found scattered remants of one covey, then an undisturbed bunch of about 25. Took six more birds before lunch.

	ad ♂	ad ♀	Jn ♂	Jn ♀	
Totals:	0	1	6	2	= 9

Dog did well on retrieves but made no points. He trailed and picked up a runner on a hot sunny slope.

Sorenson

Dec. 6, 1969

Dsc
V. Hawthorn

5 Spring
6 pheasants
(2 Valsetz)
2 Snipe

Vern and I took no. 2 double. There were no ducks on the pond at daylight and within 45 min. a heavy fog descended that did not burn off until 10 Am. We killed our first ducks about then and ended with five Spring at 11 Am.

Seemed to me that birds were actively staying off the no. 2 blind which is a pretty solid looking structure when the barrels are surrounded by tumble weeds. I think we should fence all blinds next year and cultivate a surrounding fringe of grass and weeds, which would help conceal the blind itself.

Had lunch with M. Cox at Mound Farm and then went pheasant hunting. After trying one ditch we moved into the Sacramento which was loaded — a hundred or more rolled out to the north. Had all the shooting we really needed and Vern and I had six birds (4 cocks, 2 hens). Frozed the cocks with regular pheasant trap. Vern did very well — got a fresh field only once. He made one classic point on a big cock and retrieved him handsomely after the kill.

Lots of water in the Sacramento now — need hip boots.

Ike McMillan, Brandon
Dec 13-16, 1969

Hunted quail with Ike and Dee for four days. Two of the days we concentrated on dog training, using one of the "home corner" — the eucalyptus grove. Birds had been little shot and held well in grassy cover. The last morning I shot only at birds held on good points by dog. Made eight good clean kills all of which he retrieved neatly. This is the sort of training a new pup really needs.

The other two days we hunted the upper Piney woods for quail and the Diablo range for chukar. In the Piney area the birds were shittish and tended to run in cheatgrass cheatgrass, with the result that the pups got wild and confused.
Likewise in the heavily overgrazed chukar country nothing would hold still, and hunting was something of a track meet. We had some excellent retrieving but not much bird handling. Found an amazing concentration of chukars around a water hole on the SE corner of Diablo range — many coveys of 10 to 40 birds, aggregating hundreds in a 4 square mile or so. Nearly all young. The quail likewise had a good year, averaging over 70% young.

Sorenson

Dec 20, 1969

Fantastic deluge of rain — enough to discourage me from sitting in a blind. Woody and I watched the water fall around our car, parked at usual spot beside no. 5, then quit and drove to Woody's place on Moore Road south of here just to look around (still through the car window). Such birds as were flying over the ponds were nearly all teal, shoveler and a few widgeon. We found out why. The spike and mallards were sitting around in big rafts on the green pastures west and south of Sorenson. Thousands of white spike breasts showed from many points in the short grazed pasture lands and now and then you could see a flock come in to join the rafts. The pastures were puddled but not flooded. This apparently is where the big ducks disappear in heavy driving rain.

We drove back to Sorenson's and looked forlornly out toward our pheasant grounds (Valsac). Looked even worse than the duck ponds.

So for once we showed a modicum of sense and drove home, thereby recapturing a few of our dwindling supply of brownie points.

Sorrows — 2 Yakac pheasants

Dec. 27, 1969

The rains of the past week or two finally caused the water control authorities to open the gates on the by-pass. Friday evening all was still OK, but Ted worked into the night picking up our decoys. We thought we would have time for a short Saturday but there was a delusion. When Gary Jay and I drove out at daylight we were looking at a rapidly expanding sheet of water reaching almost to Elks parking lot. To the south toward our pond all was completely submerged.

Remained N wind but there were few ducks flying and no geese at all. Certainly no chance for a shoot.

We mobilized a pheasant hunting party and set out for Yakac, walking the levee that separates ponds on the Elks property. Reached the Wedge of Yakac and walked two levees, jumping hundreds of pheasants ahead of us fleeing the water. Gary and I shot two hens and missed some downwind pass shots punted our way by Lee & others. Made our way back to automobiles — water steadily rising.

So much for this years pheasant hunting. I took 19 of my quota of 40 pheasants.

1969 - 1970 Season

Ducks killed	324	Sprig killed	293
Ducks per Shooter Day	4.32	Geese killed	9

Teal Ruth Pond
4 members
Limit - 6 per day

Penobscot Ranch — 9 quail

Jan 5-10, 1970

Much club ad pheasant pasture under water so closed the hunting season until 15 on the quail ranch. Saturday Bly was a downpour but it let up about 10:00 and we found birds coming out then to feed. Worked over two big covies — one in blackberries near the rental farmhouse, other in draw above cattail pond (where we met first trip). Wet grass and birds would not stick — kept running and flushing wild. Took only four, then rain started again heavy, so we quit.

Next day was misty with light intermittent rain. Returned to second covey and found about 40 of them on points above Manzanita patch. Again no jump shooting, but I got 4 on pass shots and one more on a jump.

The nine birds for two days were:

Ad ♂	Ad ♀	Imm ♂	Imm ♀	Total
1	0	5	3	= 9

One bird had a big hippoboscid fly which I collected. Woody identified it as Stilbometopa impressa.

Had lunch in the car, cleaned the birds and left for home about 1:00 PM. Heavy rain all the way home.

Sorensons

March 28, 1970

Flood waters have receded and we were able to drive to no. 5 blind. Grass and weeds starting to get on spring growth — some 6" high now.

Picked up 16 of my 24 stand. up decoys that were left in the ground when the flood waters came Dec. 27. The rest floated off I guess but the remaining ones were OK — needing new paint.

Plucked my orthopedic office chair out of the plastic blind and bailed both barrels empty. Transplanted a dozen slips of reed canary grass to the vicinity of no. 5 with the idea that more natural cover would help for those spring. Will return later to fence the blind.

April 4, 1970

Met Bill Hays at Sorensons and between us we fenced all five blinds with woven-wire except the, steel posts. Added the barbed wire on no. 5 fence. Bill will come back next week and finish barbed wire, other details, on the balance of the blinds. Cattle are expected in our pond area about April 15.

BK } 12 sprigs
EWR }

Sorenson

Oct 17, 1970

Opening day at last! Betty and I settled in no. 5 with a stiff NW wind blowing. Enormous flocks of sprigs were in the air and they worked the main pond well but not the south end. Ted limited in #2 double in half hour or so; Bill Harp moved over there from 4 and finished his limit; then Betty and I moved in and had plenty of shooting up till 10:30, by which time everyone else in the whole region had finished shooting and the ducks were settling down for the day.

In no. 5 we had 4 sprigs when we transferred at 8:40. A few bunches worked into my decoy spread nicely. Am hopeful for good results later, with emphasis on the big spread of standing blocks. A SE wind would be much better for #5.

Of the 12 birds, 11 were butter fat and one big drake was trim but not fat laden. I still do not understand how newly arrived migrants get in such good condition in early fall, before grain stubbles are available.

Saw a few pheasants along the levees — some young roosters are not yet fully feathered.

Not many ducks in yet — saw a dozen or so. Only 4 jacksnipe — no big flights yet.

DSt 6 spring
Dennis
Degaarden 3 spring

Solomon

Oct 17, 1970

Came back from Berkeley last night with Dennis Degaarden. We went to #2 double with a good N breeze blowing, but to my surprise and chagrin we were not in the hot flight line today. Most action was at #1 (Petrie) and #6 (Kenney) where limits were taken before 9 AM. We stayed until last vestige of flight ceased at 10:30 and had 9 species. We shot well and did it but many got by us. It was simply a light flight in our spot. During the morning the wind shifted to every point of the compass and it rained some, suggesting we were at the vortex of a light storm. Perhaps this influenced the birds in some subtle way.

Saw only two snipe today — both flushed from south edge of the pond.

Oct 24, 1970

DSt - 7 spring

At first choice I took no 2 double and was rewarded by a brisk daylight flight, despite the absolute lack of wind. I limited in 35 minutes while Ted K. in no. 6 hodrit had a shot. As I left Ted came over to the double, took 4 birds which I was working my way to the car, and finished in another couple of hours.

Sorenson

Oct 24, 1970 (cont.)

In the afternoon Jed and I floated a new liner out to the no 2 double to repair the leak in the ~~north~~ west barrel. Set the liner on a redwood base and bolted in in place from the top. It will be fine for a long time I think. Saw 2 gadwall.

Dinner at Little Joe's.

Oct 25, 1970 Br 7 Spring

Jed took the double, I went to no 4. Again there was not a breath of wind at daylight and relatively few birds in the air. We both started with 4 birds in first hour, but it took a couple more hours to complete our limits. I finished in no. 6 when a W breeze came up and birds working the main pond began passing #6 on the back swing. Watched no. 5 closely and believe I could have taken a limit there too, though it would have been pretty scratchy. I shot very well today - taking 7 birds with ten shells, one long double included.

Widgeon are increasing in number and there are a few more teal but virtually no shovelers or mallards. Saw a few gadwalls for the first time today - passed close shots twice.

Saw 4 pelicans. Lots of curlews and black-bellied plovers.

Sorenson

Bk - 7 spnj

Oct 28, 1970

Bill Bays went to #2, Jed to #1, and I went into #6. Slight north wind — just enough to ripple the surface of the pond. Bill and I had a fabulous shoot, both limiting on spnjs in under an hour. Jed had to move to no. 2 to finish — the N wind wasn't strong enough to draw birds up toward the north levee. Flight was good enough all over our pond so any blind would have had a shoot, no. 4 and 5 included. As the sun came bright on the marsh I saw several flocks working low over my stick-up spnj beauts at #5.

There has been a noticeable influx of widgeon in the past few days. Scattered birds mixed into the spnj flocks and some separate bunches. Also a few more teal and a bunch or two of ring-necks. Still hardly any shovelers.

I shot phenomenally — best ever in my recollection — 8 shells, 8 birds dead in the decoys (the extra was a widgeon — one of a double with a spnj, which went to Little Joe)

Saw 6 jacksnipe

After leaving the marsh I ran young Dig for nearly two hours on pheasants. Worked his ass off, trailing 50 ft of clothes line. He needed it!

Bx - 7 spngs
Wwn - 7 spngs

Journeys

Oct 31, 1970 (Sat.) (Chas Bx 5 Volsac pheasants)

Starry calm this morning, but the birds worked our good anyway. Ted won out by #2 with a limit in 45 minutes - 8 shells, 8 spngs. I guess he took the notion last Wednesday that I had thrown down the gauntlet, so he took the challenge and duplicated my accomplishment. Bill Harp moved over to 2 from #4 and limited but would have gotten his birds as fast in 4. I believe. I won out by #5 by 7:45, and Woody finished in #6 shortly after. Spng limits all around!

Shooting on the main Gilmore club was spotty and on Round Farms it was lousy. Ken Norrish alone in their #31 blind did not get a bird! We are better off than we know in our little puddle. (incl. Harp Bx guest)

At 11 Orn the Volsac Grenadiers assembled for the mutual attack on the pheasant population. Tom Proctor is our new member, in place of Doyle. We all took two or three birds and quit except Cox who seemed to want to finish his season's quota. He took 10, Frank Hayward his guest had only 1.

Young Diz was magnificent! Several birds killed over solid points, three good retrieves. It was a lovely day.

Saw 21 snipe this morning.

Penobscot Ranch, Auburn Tguard

Nov. 1, 1970

Woody and I drove to Pine View Motel, Georgetown yesterday afternoon. After showers and drinks we had dinner in the Motel and watched the parade of "trick or treat" kids

Started hunting in the "pond basin" NW corner of ranch where Al and I did well last year. In an hour and a half we did not jump a covey - only some scattered singles in line rather high in the basin.

Moved to the "Barn area" near the main lake and continued another hour and a half of futile search for a fresh covey. Scattered again gave Woody a few shots.

For lunch we drove to the little basin just S of "pond basin" where Al and I spotted a covey last year opening day and worked them over good. This time they found a covey of about 15 and they stuck in brush, giving us a bit of shooting. We took 5, along with 2 woody had earlier:

1 adult male
2 adult females Pretty poor shoot this.
4 immature females
7

Again Dave delighted with Dig's performance. Hunted close and carefully, made 4 good retrieves.

Bc 1 spring
2 widgeon

Sorenson

Nov 4, 1970

Hard rain yesterday and few birds were left in vicinity of our club when daylight come today. At 7:15 rain started again and it poured for about two hours. I left blind #5 at 10 Am with three birds, about average for most blinds in the area.

Did not shoot pheasants.

Saw 27 snipe — good flight.

Volusia

Nov 7, 1970

4 Volusia pheasants (♂, 3♀) all adults

Social events Friday night, so Woody and I drove up Sat. AM arriving about 10 AM. Duck shooting was a complete catastrophe so we were glad to have missed it.

Hunted with Les Hedding and Lil Colby. Lots of birds today in heavy cover of Sacramento pond and another big concentration on the N ditch. But I stayed in pastures W of South Pond where young dog did a fine job on points, running retrieves, tracking a cripple 100 yds down a ditch. His performance was fine for an inexperienced puppy. Woody's Mimi got in the act too with an enthusiastic retrieve from a canal.

Tremendous pre-sunrise flight — greatest I ever saw here. We jumped several hundred birds — some bunches of 15 and 20.

Bk
Ken Morris { 2 mallards
2 spnj
2 widgeon.
1 g-w teal

Sorenson

Nov 14, 1970

6 jacksnipe
4 Valsac pheasants

Took Ken to #2 double but the flight was light. A modest north breeze didn't do much for us, though we had the only shooting on the pond. Vic didn't get a bird in #6 and Ted had only one in #4. We made some fortunate retrieves — a crippled coch spnj reached the west levee before I could get to him and made his way 100 yds. down the outside ditch before I spotted him. Another flew past #5 and fell dead. By accurate marking we located him. All in all we were lucky to come out with seven birds. I miss Jacs!

After drinks at the clubhouse we set out for the wily pheasant. Hunted the Sacramento pond and the pastures just N of it. Plenty of birds, but they were sitting out wild and we didn't get much dog work. Ken and I took four between us — two cocks and two hens.

There was a fantastic jacksnipe flight in the Sacramento — I would say 150 or so. We shot a lot of shells and took six. They were jumping long today, unlike last week and when they seemed very tame (season not open then, of course).

Some big flights of geese went over headed south (cacklers and specs mostly) and four or five flights of swans.

Saw about 40 snipe from the duck blind.

1 g-w teal
5 jacksnipe
1 Valsar pheasant

Sorenson

Nov 15, 1970

I stayed over last night. Dinner at Little Joe's.

This morning Ted went into #2 and was shunted - first time ever on this pond he says. I shot a teal in #5. A lot of high ducks went over but they didn't want to stop. Also a continuing flight of geese, all way up there.

The water level is holding steady in the pond; we haven't lost any as nearly as I can tell since the place was flooded before season opening. Hazelton went around with a tractor and scoop before flooding and patched the weak spots in our levee — apparently with good effect.

We returned to the Sacramento area for pheasants and I held off shooting, waiting for good points. Ring made one dandy in the pasture and I took the bird — only one I shot at. Woody and Phyllis came up for pheasants and we both worked the snipe over some more, with modest results. Woody gave me all his birds so I had a nice mess to take home

The full quota of long-billed curlews has reached the ranch — we see several hundreds each day. Also many dowitchers and yellowlegs. Only a few black-bellied plovers lyr — they peaked here a couple of weeks ago.

Snipe tally in #5 blind — 47 for the morning.

The McWilliams ranch, Shandon — About 41 quail

November 20, 21 and 22, 1970

Drove to Shes Thursday evening and had three days quail chasing. First two days we went to the piney woods and worked like hell with very modest luck. Birds are not numerous this year — mostly adults and they refuse to scatter and hold. One covey we jumped four times and it still hung together and hit the ground running. First day was so bad we went to the eucalyptus grove and scattered 150 or so of Shes own birds but even they refused to hold still. I did get some nice points from Meg.

Last day we set out for the Diablo range and hit two big bunches (about 70 each) in the rocky canyon west of the upper cottonwood spring. One of these bunches we scattered good and pinned and had a fine shoot, ending with limits before lunch. Ate under the lone juniper at the mouth of the rocky canyon. Back at the car we jumped two chukars but didn't get a shot. Drove around to the big rocks & stock pond where Dru and I saw so many chukars a year ago, but there was little sign. Two coveys of quail near the rocks — perhaps 75 birds in all.

Of the 41 birds we took in three days, about 25 were adults — poor crop generally.

I drove home Monday PM in time to get to the office for the afternoon.

7 Spring

Sorenson

Nov. 25, 1970 (Wednesday before Thanksgiving)

Raining like hell this morning in Berkeley and I almost went back to bed. But I had heard a rumor that a new flight of spring had arrived in the Valley so I dragged myself out on the highway, reaching the club as the boys were finishing the breakfast dishes.

Rain let up to a fine mist at daylight and there was a strong south wind. Ted took #2 so I went into #6. The air was full of birds, but it was so dark and mild (Wuthering Heights!) that we couldn't see to shoot till 10 minutes after legal opening. But it didn't matter because the spring kept pouring over our pond and we both limited in less than an hour. Big flocks would loom out of the haze to the north and dip down to our pond, mostly passing down the center and then veering east right over #5 (I think I could have limited there even quicker). Enough flocks veered to one edge or the other to give us all the shooting we needed. I was touching them down pretty smartly — 8 birds with 10 shells. The 8th came on my last shot when I chose a big cock spring and killed him clean but also took a hen beside him. Of the 8, 7 were big, heavy and loaded with fat. The skinny one went to Little Joe, as per custom.

A big phalanx of swans came right over me very low, fighting the wind and calling plaintively.

Saw only about 15 jacksnipe. The rain discouraged us from pheasants.

1 cock pheasant

BR 2 spnig
1 widgeon
4 g-w teal
7 ducks

Sorenson

Nov. 28, 1970

Rainy, gusty weather and a strong south wind. No. 5 blind was literally deluged with big flocks of teal and shovelers early, but the flights thinned by 8:00. Very few spnigs working down to our pond. Rain seems to have scattered them.

I had a nice little shoot based mostly on teal. At one point I stood up in the boat to take a long poke at a passing spnig (missed it), and at the shot a big cock pheasant swinged 20 yards down the check to the west. I turned and killed him with my other barrel. This added a fine touch to the hunt.

Jacksnipe seem to have migrated on, or at least scattered widely with the rains. I saw only 20 or so all morning and half of these were in one flock passing high overhead. The peak of the snipe migration this year came between November 1 and 15 — three protracted weekends of good shooting, of which only the third one was legally available to us.

Road is so muddy that I came down with Ted Kenney in his 4-wheel drive pick-up, as did Little Joe.

BR 1 coch spriz

Sorenson

Nov. 29, 1970

Still raining and generally miserable weather. Already we are hearing threats of the by-pass flooding — a dreary prospect.

I took #2, Jed #6 but there were no ducks, not even teal. Could have killed a few shovelers. I have a camouflaged umbrella created from one of Betty's with the aid of various colored spray paints. In the downpour I can sit in a barrel quite snugly, faced down wind with the back of the umbrella hooked over the outer rim of the barrel. This keeps the rain off me, but generally in a rain such as we had today there is no flight, so why go out there?

The umbrella is a bit awkward for shooting but the one spriz I got came in low and I shot from under the shelter without even raising it — caught him "right between the face."

Fair number of geese (mostly cacklers) on the move today and lots of big skeins of sprigs, staying very high. No bunches came down to any of the ponds on Sorenson or Mound Farms — only shovelers. Several lunches of spoonies killed on Mound Farms (Colby, Moore and guest). Better spoonies than mockin'.

Saw 10 gadwall

Dr Spring

Sorenson

Dec. 2, 1970

Word filtered through that the by-pass definitely would be flooded, in fact water even now is going over the weir. So I drove up at daylight to help Ted pick up decoys. We sat out in the blinds for a short spell at daylight but there was nothing much about. I got one shoveler Spring in SW corner of the pond - a cripple probably. The jumped alone.

Bill Hays was on hand to help. The three of us secured the decoys in about 2½ hours. Wrapped up the strings and piled them in a barrel, then covered all with a floor board and wired it in place. Thus nothing can really get away from us. I left a few of mine out at #5 — long stiched Spring stand-up decoys that seemed securely planted and a dozen floating decoys tied down to weeds. Hope they ride it out.

Much of Valsetz pheasant area is expected to go under, which may terminate our pheasant shooting as well as ducks. Pretty damn sad situation this early in the winter.

Saw only 1 jacksnipe. They are all gone I guess. Big flight of curlews now.

G. McPeak 16 quail
DBL

Penobscot Ranch, Auburn

Dec. 5-6, 1970

The rain which drove us from our duck and pheasant area was still pelting down Friday night, though it had been predicted to stop on Wednesday. Saturday morning looked a nite better so Gordy and I drove up, emerging into lovely sunshine near Auburn.

Saturday PM we hunted the area S of the big lake (with the barn beside it) - rolling hills mostly Canaothus cuneatus with understory of grass largely grazed off by cows. We found scattered quail everywhere we went, but mostly in little groups of 2 to 3. Largest "covey" was 7 birds. I am inclined to think that the storm scattered the birds this way. In any event it made for unpossible hunting. We killed 5 birds, of which 4 were adult.

Next morning we went to the other side of the highway - country I had never seen. Pretty fair road to a hilltop in open pasture land and there we encountered (still in the car) a real bonanza covey of 75 to 100 birds. They flushed in three groups, each heading a different direction. We took after the one group that went into fairly open brush and blackberry patches and had a pretty good shoot, taking

Penobscot Dec 5 & 6, 1970 (cont)

eleven quail in a couple of hours of tramping around. Birds weren't holding for points, but young Kley did very well really in pointing coveys in blackberry thickets. He was effective on retrieving too. We lost one bird that Gordy put down (apparently it ran) and one I knocked crippled into impossibly dense blackberries.

There is no longer any doubt in my mind that blackberries are the key to covey location on Penobscot. A blackberry tangle is "home base" for every good bunch I know on the property. With Mr. Long would let us plant some where cover is needed, but as a livestock man he objects, naturally.

Our kill for the two days:

Adult		Immature		
♂	♀	♂	♀	
6	7	—	3	= 16

A Cooper hawk was harassing the birds where we hunted the first day.

Saw help a dozen cottontails and I shot one for Gordy, who is an old Missouri farmboy.

In above kill record note the high proportion of adult females in a year of low reproduction.

1972 { 2 Valsa pheasants
1 Ron goose
2 coch sprigs

Valsa

Dec. 12, 1970

Water in the by-pass is down a bit and some of Valsa said to be out of the flood, so Woody and I gave it a try. Arrived at Mound Farm parking lot at 10 Pm (couldn't drive further) and walked to the SW corner of Valsa in dense fog. The place was resonant with the sounds of sprigs and geese — obviously the waterfowl have come back. Woody and I took separate ditches and dipped off into the fog. A high flock of white geese loomed over me and I pulled a long left barrel down clean dead, only to find that it was a fat handsome little Ross. Smashed near a mass of sitting sprigs and waited in the weeds for half an hour for a pass shot. Finally a counting party of sprigs came dippy-doodle right over me and I took a good double of fine fat drakes.

We found perhaps a dozen pheasants on the ditches and took two apiece — three of the four were classy, solid points by Dinz.

When the fog lifted we could see the numbers of ducks sitting about on our flooded fields. Would judge no less than 100,000 — mostly sprigs — on Sorenson and Mound Farm properties. The geese settled elsewhere — couldn't get a fix on them.

Woody got 2 geese, 2 pheasants and 1 or 2 sprig.

A fine day.

Sorensons

Dec 19-20, 1970

Gordy McPeak and I tried the waterfowl, despite the fact that the flood is only partly receded. Saturday AM we went into barrels (Gordy in #6, Ole in #5) but the mass of ducks and geese on the big Gilmore pond sucked everything away from us. So Gordy went over to the levee bordering Gilmore on the west and hid behind a gate. Courtesy pantun 4 sprigs kept sallying forth and he had some long shooting bagging two sprigs. I had a teal in #5, then joined Gordy to watch the spectacle. Didn't kill anything but it was fun to see.

Sunday AM Gordy went back to the Gilmore levee and brought out four sprigs. I stayed on our pond and got a sprig and a teal. #6 It was impossible to make the big mass of birds on Gilmore leave the pond — they just moved about locally.

A rack of stand-up sprig decoys left in #5 pond with a metal lid over them were gone when the flood waters receded. We found them set up for action beside the cattail stringer between #4 and 5. A poacher had taken advantage of the situation but happily he did not elect to steal the decoys — too long a haul I suspect. We took them to the clubhouse.

Saw 20 pachmigs, mostly on pastures to the west. This count was Dec 20 — did not get a count on 19th.

DM - 4 spnj
1 mallard
1 widgeon

JS2 - 3 spnj
1 widgeon

Sorenson

Dec 26, 1970

Birds are working back into our pond some, with geese in most of the Bilmar barrels and the concentration of birds dispersed. Judy started in #4 but I moved him to #2, too late to catch the good early flight. He had a lot of action though. I had six birds early in #5 but failed to get the seventh. Could have taken a bushel of widgeon, spoonies or teal. Josh young dog into the blind and he worked hard on retrieving, though he is still awkward at catching active cripples.

There are a lot of geese in the area and thousands of swans, but they seem to be headquartered on the Island SE of our property. Could hear them constantly but few flocks came west.

Of the birds we took, crops contained assorted wild seeds (if they contained anything) — no grain. They are not as fat as they were earlier in the season. A very few birds are dying on the pond — presumably cholera — but no major epizootic has developed. I saw more freck dead ducks a week ago than today.

Still a scattering of snipe about, but few light in the S end of our pond. Saw 14 for the day. Nearly all the curlews and plovers have left.

Dbl ad } 7 Spring
Duty } 7 widgeon
#2

Sarmsom

Jan. 6, 1971

We had a fine shoot in #2 double, most of it between 11:01 Dbl and noon. Primarily the birds working down to us were widgeon and spoonies, few spring or teal. Jed had even better shooting in #6, limiting at noon with 7 spring. Bill Harp held down #4 all morning to no avail — absolutely no action toward the South end, perhaps because it was largely frozen. Bill ended with 1 spring. Blind #1 would have been better.

Saw 15 mipe, mostly just passing over.

Penobscot Ranch

Jan 6-7, 1971

After lunch at the clubhouse we took off for the grail grounds. Arrived at Penobscot late in the afternoon and had about a 45 minute walk along the Eastern border where Gordy and I found so many birds Dec 6. Saw bunches of 25, 10, and 5 o but didn't really get into any of them. Made the mistake of chasing the big bunch over the line fence into the dense timber where they made monkeys of us. Scattered apoot, wouldn't stop running; we had no shooting at all. It was good to see that number of birds though.

A big flock of honkers (40+) was in the pasture below the knoll where we park. They

Penobscot Ranch

Jan 6-7, 1971 (cont.) took off as we were putting up our guns. Next morning, same place, as we were getting rigged to hunt they came back and after two circles lit in same pasture — counted 44. Very pretty.

Started out toward the brushy knoll to NW & ran where we saw a group of 25 or so last evening. Found them promptly and scattered them pretty much where Gordy and I got them down before. After much ranging about, over same ground, we killed ten. Birds were holding very close in weeds, blackberry and rushes, but for some reason they couldn't find them. No frost at all, under conditions that looked ideal to me — cold (ground frozen), moist, as the frost melted, very little breeze.

Drove them to end where BL and I used to hunt. After lunch we stalked a pair of mallards in the little pond and got them both. Flying swans well on retrieves. Then took a pass over the low brushy hills to north — Jerry jumped a covey of 15 or so of which we succeeded in taking only one

Bag check:

Ad ♂	Ad ♀	Im. ♂	Im ♀	Total
5	2	2	2	= 11

Still no sign of an influx of deer. Saw two, but very few tracks or fresh droppings.

DK #5 1 widgeon
5 5-w teal
FSL #4 2 spriz
45-w teal
11 Valrae pheasants

Sorensons
Jan. 9, (Sat) 1971

Jerry went to #4 and I went into #5. Lots of teal, spoonie and widgeon working, but few spriz down at the south end. Occasionally a single spriz or a pair would come south but mly showed casual interest in decoying. My stand-up decoys didn't look any better to them than the floaters. We had a fine teal shoot, however.

There were thousands of geese in the area and hundreds of thousands of ducks, but when shooting began they gathered en-mass at Little Holland East of the ship canal. Those that worked toward us favored the east ponds, few came as far west as West Bitten.

At noon Les Gladding released a truck load of pheasants along the west edge of Sacramento pond. Early afternoon we went after them, taking 11. Jerry had a fine time and so did Meig. Liberated birds hold very well for points and do not sneak away like wild pheasants. Meig made many solid points and one difficult water retrieve along the big canal. One cripple in particular gave him a healthy run.

The country is full of swans now and they cruise low over the landscape, adding a nice touch.

21 snipe seen in #5, many more around Sacto. pond.

DSL ad 2 Sprigs
FSL 3 widgeon
1 G-W teal

Sorensons

Jan 10, 1971

Fritz and I shot the double today, but the flight was substantially less than yesterday. Overcast, drizzly, light W or SW wind.

We both shot well but had few chances at sprigs.

Didn't go for pheasants, but Woody went out and got six birds, mostly along the N ditch.

Big venison stew last night — DSL as cook.

DSL - 5 sprigs
3 Valsetz pheasants

Jan 16, 1971

I shot the #2 double, and although things were pretty thin I did bring in 5 nice sprigs, four of them fat drakes. One big drake absorbed both barrels and flew high over #6, crashing to the ground obviously dead somewhere East of the pond. I went on the line to the road and searched for half hour, finally giving it up. Back at the clubhouse I found that the bird had fallen in the road and Bill Harp had taken it in! I got it back in a hurry.

Had a good terminal pheasant hunt on Valsetz. Klug made three solid points and I got them all a shot apiece. Woody got 2, Jim Proctor 1. Only men with dogs had so much as a shot.

I ended the season with 30 Valsetz pheasants.

BR - 2 cock sprigs

Sorenson

Jan 17, 1971

Last day of the season and Ted and I were there to officiate. I took two nice heavy cock sprigs in #6 and should have had one more on a chance for a double, which I missed. Ted had only one widgeon in no. 2 double. We didn't even have any chances to unload on teal or widgeon — very poor flight. Tremendous accumulation of ducks and geese were on the Filmore pond at daylight but they cleared out promptly for Little Holland and didn't come back. We quit at 10 AM.

Picked up all the decoys around our blinds and stripped the barrels of boats and floor boards. Left the pond at noon, ready for the long wait till next October.

We drove a stake to signify to Jim Hazedorn where we wanted #4 blind relocated — about 50 yards N and a little E of present location. This might become a much improved blind in future years. I considered asking for #5 to be moved a bit N but decided to pass that for this year.

We talked about putting out a spread of stand-up sprig hearts at the point of grass SE of the #2 double — about in center of our shooting area. I will have to make them, however!

Nice lunch at Little Joe's.

The McMillans

Jan. 22, 23, 24, 1971

Returned to Inez for some additional bird shooting and to discuss the grail study being funded through C.A.S. by Mr. Peter McBean. I came up with a much clearer picture of what may regulate good and poor grail years than I had before. If you presume that the chemical dietary element that jazzes up the grail sexually is in the sprouting seedlings of forbs such as filaree, lupines, lotus, Ceanothus, bur clover, etc. then it would follow that forb years would start birds off on a strong sexual bent way back in mid-winter when sprouting begins. Conversely the birds don't seem to get this stimulus in grass years, though they are healthy enough. This is a forb year and we found crops full of small leaves of the seedlings. We look for a good hatch in 1971. Now we must find out what the stimulating chemical is.

We shot one day in the pine-oak area and found a fair number of young birds. Also over the hill N of Inez, in the Eucalyptus covey, there were some young. Both of these areas had burned ground (one wildfire, the latter Ike's controlled burning) which may have produced some forbs even in a "grass year".

Ding was superb — many points, good work all around.

Brad
Lee Baldock 5 grail

Penobscot

Jan 31, 1971

Last day of the season and Betty and I joined Lee for the closing ceremony. We hunted hard all morning and got up 60+ birds beside the goose pasture (Eg highway) and another covey of 10 or so near the ridge. But we never did really get any scatters to stick. Some birds did hang tight in the big blackberry jungles but they wouldn't come out till you walked by and turned your back. All told the grail made us both pretty silly all day.

I recommended to Lee that some of the management money be set aside to build fenced enclaves where heavy dense cover (cooper etc) could be cultivated to supply unpressable escape areas and safe roosts. Heavy blackberry stands do this, but the ranchers won't let us spread blackberry about any more than it is. We saw three Cooper hawks during the day. I think they create a demand for dense escape covers — much more so than at Ike's where hawks are rare.

This was not Meng's day. He made some desultory points but didn't seem able to handle the birds like he did a week ago. Both I mean what governed scent reception.

1 ad ♂, 1 ad ♀, 2 im ♂, 1 im ♀ = 5 birds

Swanson

Feb 27, 1971

Woody and I went up to plant reed canary grass around the blinds on west Bitten pond. Two big clones served to plant up four of the blinds — nos. 1, 2, 5 and 6. Couldn't do anything yet about no. 4 since the barrel hasn't been installed in its new location. Pond bottom is dry enough to walk around but not firm enough to hold up a car, so we did our planting afoot. Barrels were not full of water so I guess there was no flooding after Sharon Cloud.

There was a substantial die-off of waterfowl, due to cholera apparently. Fish & Game crew picked up thousands of birds for burial just a week or so ago, according to Jim Hagadorn.

Saw lots of pheasants in and about our pond area — some flushes of a dozen or so at a time.

April 10, 1971

Woody, Mike Erwin and I fenced blinds #1, 2, 5 and 6. Jim hasn't gotten around yet to ~~fen~~ moving no. 4.

Plenty of crowing pheasants in evidence, and territorial drake mallards defending sections of slough.

Red canary grass seems to have caught on well.

Sormson

Sept 25, 1971

Woody and I hauled decoys out to the blinds but couldn't spread them because weeds are not yet chopped and there are still sheep grazing our pond. Put new freezer in the clubhouse.

Checked the three wood duck boxes. Bees in one and no duck use in other two. We missed completely this year.

Upland Field Station

Sept. 30, 1971

Quail season opened early in the northern counties and Woody and I went to Upland to give them a try. Bill Longhurst hunted with us and more importantly guided us to areas where he knew coveys lived. We found these birds incredibly difficult to hunt. They would take to the tall, tough chaparral and run just like mtn. quail. Out of 7 coveys we took 7 birds all day. Guy Connally got two hunting separately. Our bag:

Ad ♂	ad ♀	Juv ♂	Juv ♀	
1	1	4	3	= 9

We also took 2 band-tailed pigeons (Season just opened) and 3 mourning doves (Season ends today).

Saw a pair of golden eagles and lots of deer, though no bucks.

BSL and EWL
14 sprigs

Sorenson
Oct 16, 1971

Opening day and Betty and Lauren on hand to offer proper salutations to the new crop of pintails. There seemed to be fewer birds on the marsh than last year but we had no trouble getting our limits by 10:30 AM, shooting in #2 double. A misty intermittent rain fell off and on during the morning which may have pushed some birds out of the valley last night.

Hardly anything visible except sprigs — a few widgeon, very few mallards and teal, and a couple of shovelers. No geese and only one yellowlegs seen from the blind (more jumped as we exited South end).

Young Duj is getting to be an enthusiastic and competent duck dog. Of our 14 birds, we scaled 3 out over the levee and Duj found them all. Moreover he loves to retrieve the birds from the pond and does so with lots of gazz. He lacks Jaco's good eyes and ability to mark at long range.

Jed had a very hot shoot in #4, limiting in 45 minutes. Our new location and decoy arrangement seem effective.

1 yellowlegs

DBR - 7 sprigs

Jonesson

Oct 20, 1971

I shot #2 again and both my limit by 10:30 AM — mostly on low scrated shots. It was only the last hour that birds really worked in to me. Ted limited in #4 by noon and Woody took 4 birds in #1. Vic quit #6 when rain started about 7:30 and missed the shooting. Concensus was a very light flight, not only on our pond but main pond too.

Saw 6 snipe from blind.

Oct 23, 1971 DBR 5 sprig ; B. McP 4 sprig

Woody and I went up Friday PM and I cooked a big venison stew for eight of the "regulars".

Sat. AM I put Woody in #6 and I took #5. Big rush of birds roosting in SW corner and both Woody in #4 and Vic in #2 had some early shooting. In fact Vic was limited in less than an hour. A brisk SW breeze favored the westerly blinds. Woody and I had an occasional shot and ended up with 9 nice sprigs between us. By and large the flight was light — over on the main pond bladding and O'Connor had only three sprigs in Gravel!

Jacksnipe are coming in — I counted 16 from the blind. Also saw several little bands of black-bellied plovers. Heard one distant flock of specs. Home PM.

BR - 7 Sprigs

Forenoon

Oct 27, 1971

Brisk W breeze seemed favorable for our west blinds, so I took #2. Woody in #5, Ted in #4 and I all finished our limits about 10 AM. Vic in #6 had less action but ended with four or five birds. Good day on our pond. In contrast, no one was in yet at Elbow or on Main Forenoon pond and from sound of their shooting things were slow.

I didn't shoot very well — lots of half dead birds instead of clean kills. Scaled two cripples off in the weeds but they found both.

Saw six jackrabbits.

Forenoon

Oct 30

BR - 7 Sprigs

3 Valley pheasants

Excellent day on the duck marsh. In first 15 minutes at #6 I had four each sprigs with four shells, so I laid the gun down and watched for half an hour. Finished limit easily, as did Ted in #2 and Woody in #4. Vic shot #5 and got a snow goose and five ducks I think. Strong S breeze.

Afternoon we went for pheasants and the only problem was too many birds, with resultant confusion among the dogs and sloppy shooting on our part.

Big venison stew for dinner.

7 sprig
5 Valley pheasants

Stevinson

Oct. 31, 1971

Stormy N breezy today and a heavy flight of birds. Early they stayed up pretty high, but by holy hour they started dropping down and I limited easily in #6 before 8 AM. Moz got cold and showed some reluctance to retrieve after four or five trips out. Del have to keep him wrapped up I think on brisk windy days like this one.

A substantial flight of birds came into the Valley on Thursday when a terrific N wind blew all day. Duncan McCormick and others on the ranch noted the incoming flight, which included a lot of wedgeon and mallard, as well as sprig. Geese showed up this week end in good numbers and a few swans too. Very few sprig, however — I saw six yesterday from the blind, and three today.

Shooting pheasants in this N wind was something yet again! We all missed some downwind shots, and the dry blast didn't make for good dog work so we lost cripples in the dusty weeds. Anyhow I brought home five nice wild roosters.

Dry weather is permitting Duncan to proceed rapidly with corn harvest, followed immediately by a chopper and then a big disc. A lot of fine pheasant food and cover goes underground.

7 spring
3 Valsac pheasants

Sorensons
Nov. 6, 1971

Woody and I came up Fri. night in his new dune buggy. I was first out and took #2 (Ted #6, Woody #4, Vic #5). We all had limits by 10 AM. Late flights (5 AM ±) were superb, big bunches of 50 to 100 would maple leaf down and circle into the N breeze. Flights are still predominantly spring, though there are a few widgeon, gadwall and shoveler. Scarcely any teal yet, and very few geese.

For some reason we continue to have superb shooting on West Bellen Pond while there are dogging badly on the main club ponds (Gilmore, Ferguson), on Petri pond (Brown & Kaiser) and on the Mound Farm properties. Little Joe's pond just SE of ours is the other point where shooting has been consistently good. Here we are on the extreme south and west corner of several thousand acres of flooded duck ponds, and we are getting the best shooting. Looking at the property from the air, and at aerial photos gives no clues.

After lunch the Valsac crew (looking only for Proctor) assembled for a pheasant shoot. We pinched the north ditch and next two below there and had all the birds we wanted. Fantastic pheasant crop this year - nearly all young wild birds killed.

No big mixed flight yet - saw only 4.

6 spriz
3 Ring pheasants

Journal

Nov. 7, 1971

Had to return to Berkeley yesterday for an evening banquet but Woody and I decided to bring our wives up for a picnic today and a light pheasant hunt. Casually decided to check the ducks pond for action first. We both drove up about 8:40 AM and saw a few birds in the air. Ed was in #4, O'Connor in #2. So Woody took 6 and Betty and I went into 5. To our surprise and delight the spriz kept working all morning. Good stiff SW breeze but the flocks worked only the main pond, did not come to the south blinds. Woody took a limit of 6 spriz in less than two hours, Ed in #2 (when I moved when Old Ed left), I took 6 beauties and should have had a 7th (I didn't see him coming!). Betty moved into #6 and killed a mallard. Ed in #4 shot only one shell during all this!

We had our picnic on the sunny bank of our south levee. Very few ducks in the afternoon. Saw 16 pheasants

Went thence to the middle ditches of Palm and took 5 pheasants, which finished off our available bags (more next week). Betty killed a big rooster and I took my two on solid points. A great day.

Ray Conway quail property N of Auburn

Nov 9, 1971

Peter McBean took me quail hunting on a property about 10 mi N of Auburn, managed for quail by Ray Conway who was our guide. Conway leases (or owns) thousands of acres in the oak-digger pine - yellow pine zone which he opens up with bulldozer and seeds to a mixture of legumes. The brush piles racked up by the dozer plus the legume & weed seeds produced on the disturbed soils supply cover and food for an excellent quail population — a bird per acre on some properties. We shot into three coveys and took 15 birds as follows:

Adult		Juvenile		
2♂	4♀	8♂	5♀	= 19 total

I will go back and spend time with Conway, who has a world of experience in quail management.

Aloha Farms, District 10, Oroville

Nov 10, 1971

Fantastic flight of waterfowl on this flooded rice land. I took 7 each spring in 45 minutes and could have done it much sooner. Peter McBean, Geo. Montgomery, and guest likewise limited before 7 AM. A great sight.

BB - 68 geese
1 green-head

Stenson's

Nov. 13, 1971

Saturday morning dawned (just barely!) black, driving rain, wild South wind. I sat in the car for half hour after shooting time, watching the flight. Although I had chosen #2 and Ted went to #6, it looked better to go to one of the blinds on the S end so I hiked my way out to no. 5 arriving sopping wet in the shoulders since my camouflaged rain jacket proved to be porous in the extreme. Propped up the lid on the plaster blind with two of the stand-up decoys, and the dog and I snuggled down in a steamy but warm environment. Birds bucking their way into the wind swung back and forth across the marsh, and passed somewhere between #4 and #5. Enough came by my hidey-hole to permit an occasional shot, and I had a limit of nice birds by 9 AM. At times I had the definite feeling that birds were coming to the decoys for a closer look. In any event, I was out with my birds when Ted still had only 2 birds. He moved then to no. 4 and limited before noon.

Snipe season opened today but I saw only a few birds (4) from no. 5. Main flight not in yet apparently. I had no interest in going after pheasants and went home to Berkeley for lunch.

Bx - 4 sprigs
3 Valsac pheasants
8 jacksnipe

Gorsuch
Nov 17, 1971

Clear crisp Tuesday morning, with a good stiff breeze from the north, but this was gone by daylight. In the glassy calm I settled into #6 barrel and watched high, high flocks of sprigs and geese weave their lacework patterns against the eastern sky. Pheasants crowed, there was lots of goose and swan music, and the whispering of sprig wings created pleasure and interest, if not a lot of shooting.

I had more action in #6 than any other blind and I quit finally at 10:30 with four sprigs. Ted had only 1 sprig in #4 and Ken Donovan, shooting in #2 as a guest, had 1 teal. Old Tic shot at a lot of passing jacksnipe in #5 and had a crack at a few ducks. This was the first major let-down of the season — up to now the pond has been consistently good.

After lunch, Les Gladding and I went for pheasants and snipe. Sacramento pond is too dry for snipe though we took a few pheasants while checking it. We went then to Little Deer, S end of our pond, and N end of Mc Naughton pond. Between these areas I guess we jumped 150 snipe, and took 11 of them.

My count from #5 blind would probably have come to 50 birds or more — big influx in last few days.

Bk 2 sprig 1 teal
GMcP 1 sprig, 1 widgeon

3 Valrae pheasants
7 jacksnipe

Sorenson's
Nov. 20, 1971

Bk 1 sprig
2 cock pheasants
1 snipe

Bordy McPeak and I met at the clubhouse at 8:30 Bk and went on out to the duck pond for a look around. Sent Bordy to #2, I went with #4, Ted was in #6. By 10:30 Bordy and I had five ducks and Ted had a limit of sprigs, so we moved in on the jacksnipe. Finally got seven between us.

Joined the Valrae gang for a pheasant hunt. Put the finish on a few stretches and everyone cleared up. Took a turn around Sacramento pond and added a few more. Of the 5 pheasants Bordy and I took 3 were tagged Valrae, 2 cocks were taken as "open" birds.

Nov 21

Bordy returned to Berkeley and I stayed on to have dinner at Little Joe's. Daylight I went into #6 but had only two long shots at sprigs of which I scored on one. Led took four in the #2 double. Calm at daylight with a light W breeze later. Jacksnipe were wild as hell and I only took one.

Hunted pheasants in field E of our duck pond. Both of birds, especially in edge of the Napa "duck pond". Hardly any seed was set - no duck use. I took two nice roosters over good dog work.

Big snipe population — 60+ seen from blind.

3 spring
1 cock pheasant

Sorenson's

Nov. 24, 1971

Betty and I stopped by the pond for a couple of hours on way to quail hunt at Georgetown. I took two spring in #2 and a third (crip) jumped at south end of pond. Also took a nice cock pheasant over a fine point by Betty. Betty had only a shot or two in #5. On to the quail grounds after picnic lunch.

Penobscot Ranch, Georgetown

Nov. 24 - 26, 1971

Reached the ranch late afternoon and took a walk of about an hour before going to Pine Tree Motel. The area across the road (5) from Mallard pond has not been grazed this season and is heavily grown up in tall thick grass. I couldn't find a trace of a bird in there, even around the spring / blackberry thicket where there has always been a covey before. Today the grass was soaking wet after rain in morning and I don't think a quail would go into it. Lee Baldock hunted all day and had 2 quail (with a guest!). Party met ground and birds wouldn't lie low but he agrees there are fewer birds in ungrazed areas.

Woody and Phyllis joined us at the motel that evening.

Penobscot

Nov 24-26, 1971 (cont.)

Started the morning hunt at the saddle in heavily pastured East knoll. Heard birds calling in every direction — scattered by Lee yesterday I presume. Sun was out and countryside fresh and inviting. We soon had several coveys & sub-coveys scattered all over the knoll and had the most shooting I had ever encountered on Penobscot. For some curious reason, though, my coordination was off and I couldn't make a clean kill. At about 10:30 we went back to the car where the girls had been waiting with 11 birds between us. As we left to find new ground Woody saw a big covey fly into the marshy/blackberry draw along the east fence. We stopped the car and went after them, adding 8 more to the bag. Returned to saddle to eat picnic lunch.

After lunch Gale took my car to town and Woody and I worked the country between turkey farm and mallard pond — also mostly ungrazed. Found one bunch along creek where Pat and I found them previously and chased them around the live oak ridge, with some modest success. Bunch was not large — perhaps 25 birds.

As we were driving out we saw a covey

Penobscot

Nov 24-26, 1971 (cont) among blackberries opposite the white farm house. Eliz. Seward came along and insisted on nobilizing a hunt up the berry patches, bossing Woody and me about and yelling at her dog. We did get quite a bit of shooting there. Original bunch was 18 but we apparently encountered more in the berry patches. Both to Georgetown Hotel for Thanksgiving dinner.

Friday morning we worked the C. cucullata hills from the dead cedar (W of Lake barn) to the broom patch. Found only little scattered bunches of 6 to 8 — perhaps 20 birds in all, and took only four. It was drizzling again and birds would not sit still.

Our total bag:

Adult		Immature		Total
♂	♀	♂	♀	
5	4	11	15	= 35

This ratio (3 young / adult) is a great improvement over last year and indicates a fairly good nesting season. The birds are gathered, however, around the edges of grazed pastures where cover is adequate.

BK 7 sprig
3 Balsac pheasants
2 gadwalls

Sorenson's

Nov. 27, 1971

Woody & I returned to Sorenson Sat. evening after delivering our gals home. As last choice I took #5 & there was no action there. Wind calm today & it usually takes a breeze to pull birds to #5. Good early shooting in #4 (Vic), #6 (Woody), & #2 (Ed). After Ed left the double with a limit at 8:00 Am I went over & filled my limit by 9:30.

Went back to #5 & pulled a lid out of the bottom of the steel barrel where Vic had dropped it & jammed it by standing on it.

Then shot a few snipe while waiting for Woody to complete his hunt in #6

There seemed to be a lot more ducks in the country than a few days back, & curiously nearly all are sprigs! Saw fewer widgeon teal & shovelers than a week ago, & lots more big flocks of sprigs cruising the valley. Likewise we saw very few geese, only one bunch of swans.

Number of snipe dropped considerably — Bk'd count about 30.

Balsac gang hunted Sacramento pond in early afternoon — plenty of birds still.

3 Sprigs
BR 1 greenhead mallard
3 cock pheasants

Brensons

Dec 1, 1971

Cold and dead flat calm — sky clear until about 8 AM a heavy fog rolled in from the north and engulfed us for 1½ hours.

Great pre-shooting flight of 500+ sprigs going round and round our pond at 30 yds. but they disappeared quickly. Such birds as came in went right to Woody in #6 who limited before the fog descended. In no. 2 I had two sprigs then, Ted had two in no. 1, and Bill Harp nothing in no. 4. After fog there was an hour of desultory flight mostly to Ted who had moved into no. 6. Still heavy preponderance of sprigs, some flocks of teal, few widgeon and spoonies. Flight of sprigs is considerably reduced — rate about 20 on the Leopold blind scale.

After lunch Woody, Les Stadding and I went after cock pheasants in the fields between our pond and Silvers, including the two newly worked patches of kafir. Found a big concentration of birds and took 3 between us. I shot 4 roosters but gave one to Les. Good dog work by Woody.

Many more geese and swans in the air today than last week. One little flock of canvasbacks.

1 widgeon
11 spize } 14
1 mallard } ducks
1 shoveler

DK
Dennis Degnaden

1 cock pheasant

Sorensons

Dec 4, 1971

Dennis and I went into #2 double and had very little action for two hours which Ted filled in #6 and Woody had six birds in #4. After Ted left Dennis went into 6 and finished his limit in less than an hour. Then I moved over and took two more spize before we quit at 11:45. Good N breeze and I still am puzzled by the poor show we had in the double. Woody's shoot at #4 was all in the first hour — after that nothing. This often happens in that blind.

Still no major influx of geese. There were high flights overhead adding to the scenery but nothing using down low. Some nice flocks of swans.

Jacksnipe are way down in comparison to the situation a couple of weeks ago. Today would have been about 25. I didn't shoot at a snipe.

After lunch Woody, Dennis and I went for pheasants. Perhaps 25 or 30 birds (half cocks) came out of the hazel "duck pond." Woody got three and Dennis one. I had no shooting. He drove a lot of birds into the South hazel/cocklebur patch but when the main gang from House of Lords surrounded it 20 min. later they sprung an empty trap. Birds had run on into Little Joe marsh I guess.

Ike McMillan

Brandon Dec. 10-12, 1971

Hunted with Ike 2½ days. Plenty of action and some very good dog work. Our kill:

	Area	Adult ♂	Adult ♀	Juv. ♂	Juv. ♀	Total
12/10	Middle pasture	2	1	8	8	19
12/11	Fernandez	2	2	8	5	17
12/12	Eucalyptus grove	2	1	1	5	9

A bag of 35 young and 10 adults would seem to signify a fairly good breeding season in 1971.

Ike has brought his home covey up to 1000+ birds. A good count is difficult but that seems like a good estimate. He feeds 33 lbs. of barley / day or about .033 lb / bird / day. Birds forage on their own each morning but apparently depend largely on Ike's handout for the evening meal. How far up can he safely carry this population?

Some greens are sprouting in the area now but I found very few green stems in crops of birds taken in Power and at Fernandez homestead. Appeared to be more at Eucalyptus grove but I gave those birds to Mike Erwin and did not examine the crops carefully.

Saw several Cooper hawks — Ike says there are more this year than usual. Also saw a bobcat in the pasture.

DSL 4 spruje
1 valeae pheasant

Swensons

Dec. 15, 1971

Calm and cold at daylight with light N breeze later. In #1 I had only a dozen scratch shots and took 4 fine fat spruje, which wasn't bad. Other blinds yielded 1 spruj #6, Twisted #2, 3 spruj #4. My purpose today was to evaluate change of location of #1 barrel. We are thinking of moving it about 50 & 100 yds west. There certainly was more flights there today.

One flock of several hundred teal came over high. Lots more seen in area now. Few snipe.

Had a brief pheasant hunt after lunch.

DSL 7 spruje
7 jackcanpe

Dec 18, 1971

Cold and still at daylight with thin ice around the fringe of the pond. Mild N breeze came up later.

I had a helluva spruj shoot early in #4 — six cock birds down in first half hour. Then it slowed way down and I closed with a fat hen at 9:00 Am. Tremendous number of birds roosting in on S end — They roared out in waves when I headed for the blind.

Later in morning I went snipe hunting at S end of Little Joe's and took 7 birds. They were holding closer today and coming around into the wind. No great number of birds in area but much better shooting.

Did not go for pheasants.

Orty 2 spring
5 Shoveler

Dse 1 hooker

3 Valse pheasants

Johnson

Dec 26, 1971

Clear with breeze S and — everything looking good except that no birds would work our pond. By this I mean no spring — plenty of small ducks. I sat in #2 double until 11 AM and had not one spring — just a big lonely hooker that came over close. Orty had a bit more action at #4 but still ended up shooting mostly spoonies.

After lunch we hunted pheasants for less than an hour and took three birds, two of them on nice points.

Orty 2 gadwall
Dse 2 spring
1 hooker

Jan 1, 1972

Heavy fog filled the whole valley and never did lift. When we drove home late afternoon it still lay like a layer of quilting cotton. Hookers were roosting in field to west of our pond and milled around low at daylight. I passed first time but yielded to temptation second round and took a big one that proved to be banded (no. 578-60560). You could hear spring milling about above but very few of them found their way down to visibility level. I took two in #2 and Jed had 5 in #4. Orty didn't get a spring in #6, though he missed some shots.

Lots of white geese & cacklers over on E edge of property. Also some increase in teal.

Penobscot Ranch

Dec 29-30, 1971

I had a conference in Sacramento all day Dec 28 (Western Soc. Naturalists) but by dinner time Dick and I were at Pairview Motel. Next morning we went off in snowstorm to the gorse pasture area (there were 9 hunters there, by the way!) and found a nice bunch of 40 birds that we chased around for several hours. In net gain they wouldn't sit still and we hunted hard for our shots.

Lunch by mallard pond, then up the draw to north (toward Turkey Farm) where we found two coveys, one of which already had been scattered. Had some good shooting here, as sun came out and birds behaved better.

Next morning we scrambled over all the hills S of Long ranch + blacktop road (Cottonwood Hill, dead cedar etc) without finding a bunch of birds. Ended up where we were yesterday afternoon on hill toward Turkey Farm. Found one little gathering of yesterdays scatters — about a dozen — of which we took five. Total bag for both days:

	Ad. ♂	Ad. ♀	Im. ♂	Im. ♀	Total
Dec 29	4	0	1	6	11
Dec 30	2	1	1	3	7
					18

Home in afternoon.

6 Valsse pheasants
taken by B. McPeak, charged
to me.

Sorenson
Jan 15, 1972

A bad case of flu has me in bed since Jan 2. Body Mr. Peak ~~Balbom~~ went up in my stead to operate over the end of waterfowl season and to take a few Valsse pheasants.

The McMillans
Jan 28 - 30, 1972

I returned to Ike's to finish the shooting season. Hunted the pines first day and had a nice shoot, though I was still so weak from the flu that I couldn't do much climbing. Saturday Ike went on a shoot for brother Don and his wife Alta, and two other couples of old friends. Above the home covey up toward Ord homestead and had a fine shoot. Finished Sunday AM with a nice shoot over in the willows area (below Eucalyptus).

Birds ran about even in age ratios, adults & young.

Thus closed 1971-72 hunting season.

Sourcorn — Limits of doves

Sept 1, 1972

Woody and I opened the dove season along the big canal SE corner of the ranch. Met Morris Hoyle there, similarly inclined. Scarcely a bird visible at daylight, but they started drifting in from somewhere to the East and we had a fine flight between 7 and 9:30 PDT. All guns limited on this time — 10 birds apiece. I shot very poorly and was last to fill up.

Every bird I cleaned was full of seeds of a big bull thistle. I presume the flight originated from some thistle patch across the ship canal. The birds were coming over to our side to roost for the day in the cottonwoods. Certainly it was the best flight I ever have encountered at Sourcorn.

We checked the three wood ducks boxes, but regretably found no evidence of duck use. A little gray screech owl was in the box by the timber pond and the other two held grassy nest material which I would guess represented starling occupancy.

Had lunch near the main Gilmore pond which was being irrigated and held a good many thousand pintail, plus a few mallards and teal. The flock gave off a continuous hum like a power line on a foggy day. Saw some young pheasants but not very many.

4 Sprigs

Swanson

Oct 14, 1972

Opening day and pouring rain! I went to the #2 double with Richard Allcock and we huddled there till noon, with wet backs and bottoms and very few shells expended. Sharing the gun, Richard and I had half a dozen shots and brought in four Sprigs. Wind was out of the northeast, which is unusual at our place, and the birds tended to work high over us, then drop down toward the northeast over Delmore and up toward #80 pond on Round Lake. Shooting on the ranch as a whole was very spotty with a few hot areas and a lot of blanks. Woody took a limit in our #6 blind, getting the final bird at 12:00 noon. Ted K. had only two in #4, but he shot poorly.

Richard made a nice shot on a fast cock Sprig so we weren't unhappy — just wet as hell.

Oct 18, 1972

1 Sprig

Another scratchy day on our pond — this one very calm, warm and sunny. In newly placed #1 blind I had two shots and killed one very high bird. A bit better at #6 and #2 double but not good. No one shot the South end — water was down 5" and south blinds were nearly dry.

Doemsons

Oct 21, 1972

Came early afternoon Friday so that I could make an elk stew for supper — delicious incidentally. But we found that our pond had been overfilled water cut through dike at the outlet (which was soft, having been excavated and re-set) and pond was running dry. After supper we tried to stem the flood but it had cut down 5 ft. or more and even sand bags couldn't stop it.

In the morning all of us were invited to shoot on the main club, after their draw was completed. Wayne Braithwaite of CSIRO, Canberra, and I went to their #4 double in Ferguson pond. Heavy fog shrouded the ground all morning, breaking up just before quitting time at noon. Wayne and I did some fancy long shooting to bring in 5 birds with the one gun.

Saw many more teal and widgeon than previously, and usual quota of spoonies knocking our hats off. Snipe were mostly flying around above the fog and few came down through.

First big flight of jacksnipe — I saw over 40 today, whereas previously I saw only a couple (bed.). Also 3 stilts, some plovers, lots of dowitchers.

BR 7 spnge, 5 snipe
EWR 2 spnge

Sprunsons

Oct 25, 1972

Nice weather so I brought Betty out for her annual outing in the duck barrel. In No. 4 she had a good deal of shooting early and knocked down three spnge of which one cripple escaped over the W levee. In No. 2 I had a fine shoot, coming out with my limit about 5:30. I then went snipe hunting and took 5, mostly in the pasture South of Little Joe's pond. Fair flight of snipe but a long way from pecks. I shot well on ducks, taking my limit with 9 shells.

Oct 28, 1972

5 spnge, 1 mallard, 1 widgeon
8 snipe

Fairly good early flight in #5. There was only a slight S breeze and water was low but a few birds came down that way and I had fine when Woody quit #6 with a limit. I moved up there and took a double out of the first flock of spnge to finish up. For the first time since I can remember I took 7 ducks with 7 shells, including two doubles.

Woody and I then went snipe hunting and both took limits. Big flight in — I counted 50+ from #5 blind while I was duck shooting. We did well in the Reed Canary grass by our parking lot and in the pasture S of Little Joe's pond.

Dennis Delgarden, my guest, had his 7 spnge when Woody and I returned from the snipe hunt.

4 spize, 3 mallards
2 Value pheasants

Sorensons

Nov. 4, 1972

I won last choice and went into no. 4, but I was first out with a limit. Fair S breeze helped drive birds down into that corner. After I had 4 spize, an old hen mallard lit about 60 yds. behind me and kept yelling at the top of her lungs, calling down a nice flock of mallards that came right over me. I doubled on greenheads and a few minutes later picked up another greenhead for a limit. Used 11 shells.

No snipe in our area following the very heavy rains that apparently scattered the birds over the whole valley.

Opening of shooting preserve pheasants today and five of us went onto Value. Couldn't get cars into the area because of the mud, and we worked hard with our feet gobbed in balls of sticky ~~mud~~ clay. Weather has precluded cutting corn and there are hundreds of birds hanging in the three cornfields where they are relatively safe from our predatory intentions. They roll out ahead of us in waves but realight in corn, refusing to leave its shelter. If you knock one down in the corn you have great difficulty finding it because of the solid understory of water grass, shoulder high. Dogs can't seem to smell anything down there and we lost several cripples.

Several flocks of geese (specs) came over and Woody shot a single cackling goose that was frequenting our pond.

7 Sprigs
3 Valsac Pheasants

Sorenson's

Nov. 12, 1972

I took my class (IDS 170) to Gray Lodge Refuge Saturday to see the waterfowl. Stopping off at the duck club on the way back. Sunday started clear with slight SE breeze but after half hour of shooting the fog closed in and we sat there for three hours waiting for it to break. I had one spring in #5 before fog and missed a couple of long shots. At 5:30 came a partial break in the fog and I took 4 sprigs in 15 minutes. They definitely were working to the decoys giving me some good chances. Fog closed in again for another hour, but when it finally broke there were still a few birds flying and I took two more to finish up (10 shells).

The continued rain has driven every single snipe away — saw none at all today.

After duck, Woody and I went to the corn to try our hand at pheasants and we took 3 cocks apiece. Same old problem trying to get them out of the corn. I lost one cripple that somehow evaded the dog in the dense watergrass. He pounced on it once under a watergrass mat but somehow it slipped out and evaded us.

Now geese in the area and a few swans. The long billed curlews are here in force. Saw one wood duck flying with a widgeon.

1 Spnig
1 G-W Teal
3 Valley pheasants

Sorenson

Nov. 19, 1972

Ken Morrish came up Friday afternoon and helped me make an elk stew for the gang.

The rain has finally stopped but there were very few ducks left in the area. Ed took 3 Spnigs in the double, Ken had a Spnig and a ringneck in #6, Woody got one Spnig in #4 — total of 5 birds among the four of us. Poorest hunt we have had this year. The rain seemingly drove all the snipe away too, or at least scattered them over the valley. I saw only a couple of birds during the morning.

At about 11 o'clock Ken and I went pheasant hunting in the soggy standing corn. Ive met Woody and Ed coming out and they said practically all birds were in the corn — not in the ditches. So we struggled back and forth through the corn and tangled water grass, rolling birds out in front of us and occasionally raising one close enough to shoot. We took three birds and struggled back with 10 lbs. of mud on each boot.

Swans and geese are beginning to arrive in good numbers. A good many flocks of both came over south bound while we were pheasant hunting. Also saw some big flocks of shovelers and G-W teal — new arrivals apparently.

Penobscot Ranch, Georgetown

Nov. 23, 1972

Betty and I and the Middlekauffs came up to Georgetown for our annual Thanksgiving quail hunt. We started Thursday morning at the saddle along the north border and were into birds immediately. A little band of 10 or so flew N off the saddle and another small group flew SW to one of the near blackberry patches. We took a couple of birds out of there and then headed over the oak knoll where we finished the big bunch — 100 birds according to Woody. They flew to the oak trees beyond the cattail patch from which point we scattered them from hell to breakfast. From then on we spent a couple of happy hours kicking blackberry thickets and occasionally putting a bird out. When we quit for lunch we had 15 birds.

After lunch we hunted across the highway but we had no luck at all. We didn't find the covey on the big live-oak hill and when we crossed the creek below the dam we found only scattered singles in the Clanothus cuneatus, apparently left over from someone else's hunt yesterday. Saw several nice bands of pigeons during the day but the only ducks were only a dozen ringnecks on one of the ponds.

Penobscot

Nov 24, 1972

Started the second day on the hill just N of the foreman's house. We chased 30+ birds up over the hill and never did scatter them much. Returned to the berry thickets opposite the walnut orchard and found a regular shooting gallery, putting out perhaps 20 birds and leaving a lot secreted in the dense berries. Went then to the picnic spot near mallard pond and found 40 birds in the berry patch on the creek. They got over the hill on us and reflushed - lost 'em!

Our total bag for two days:

	Ad. ♂	Ad. ♀	Juv. ♂	Juv. ♀	
Nov 23	2	0	10	3	= 15
Nov 24	3	1	4	6	= 14

I am surprised at the good crop of young birds - 23 in. to 6 adults. Some of the young are still in molt — young Cocks with throats still gray for example. This would suggest that nesting continued until late summer.

Again it is clear that virtually every covey has a "home plate" in some blackberry thicket.

Crops contained a lot of clover-like leaves and some yellow legume seeds.

3 sprigs
1 widgeon
2 g-w teal
1 white-front goose

Sorenson

Nov. 25, 1972

Stopped at the Brigadoon after leaving Georgetown to take advantage of a Saturday duck shoot. The valley has been heavily socked in with persistent fog and today was no exception. Betty had the hottest shooting in #4 where we had flushed out thousands of birds going to the blind. She had action all morning until about 11:00 when the fog lifted some and the birds began working the main pond. Water was low in the pond and I had little attention at #5 where many of the decoys were sitting on mud. In the final tally at noon Ted had 5 sprigs and a hooker (#2), Woody in #6 had 3 mallards 2 sprigs, 1 widgeon, and Betty had 2 sprigs but lost another that swam away from her.

Ot daylight when we started shooting, a mob of hookers flew from the pasture W of our pond. Late in the morning they returned from the South and came right over me about 25 yds. high — a magnificent sight. They went over Ted in the double and the temptation was too much for him — he took one. The young spec which I took earlier came over alone and I took him since I was getting no duck shooting to keep me entertained

Dig found two cripples for me today that I never could have recovered alone.

6 Sprigs
1 Widgeon
10 Valsae Pheasants

Sprunsons

Nov 29, 1972

Took Fritz Leopold from Burlington up to the club for a duck and pheasant hunt. Morning was socked in with a high thin fog and the birds worked our pond only casually. We shot together in the #2 double and got only 3 sprigs in the first hour of shooting, then waited until after 11 Am before we had any more action. Last hour was considerably better but still pretty thin. Very few geese in the air and none of them were low. Jackrabbits still scarce on our property - saw 5 all morning and only jumped one more on the way to the car.

On the other hand we had a fine time with the pheasants. Les had made a recent release and some of these birds were outside the corn where they made a series of classy points along ditches. Fritz had a fine time shooting over points. We did hunt the corn some and put out a few wild birds of which we got three. At age 77 Fritz had more endurance in the mud than I - he ended up taking Hiz far out in the Sacramento area (now follow = 6" soft mud) to retrieve a crippled cock.

As we drove in from duck hunting we saw a red-tailed hawk on a post and a big cock pheasant on the ground below challenging the hawk to fight - very aggressive too!

Penobscot Ranch

Dec 2-3, 1972

Dusty Leupold Senior, Edith, Betty and I spent the week end in pursuit of game. We repeated the hunts of last week with the Middlekauffs - first day in the blackberry thickets of "goose pasture" at N end of the ranch, second day S of Long's near "mallard pond". Found the same coveys and had pretty good luck catching up with them. Interestingly enough, our kill for the two days was identical in age ratios with that of a week ago (6 adults, 23 young):

	Adult ♂	Adult ♀	Immature ♂	Immature ♀	Total
Dec 2	2	3	5	6	= 16
Dec 3	1	0	7	5	= 13
					29

This would seem to verify that a good crop was produced here this season.

Saw mallards several times - one bunch of 11 - and a flock of 6 ringnecks. At one point we shot several times near a pond and so frightened a fat 3-point buck that he plunged into the water and swam all the way across, emerging at a dead run! Saw only two flocks of band-tailed pigeons.

Weather was foggy first day, breaking at noon. Second day was high overcast, leading to rain in PM when we started home.

The McMullan's – Brandon

Dec 9, 10 and 11, 1972

Hunted with Ike & Dee on the 9th in Piney Woods. Scattered two medium coveys and had good luck in following them.

On the 10th Ike and I took a few birds out of his home covey, and on the 11th Peter The Bear joined me and we took a dozen birds from the eucalyptus covey. Total tally:

	Adult ♂	Adult ♀	Imm. ♂	Imm. ♀	Total
Dec. 9	6	7	2	1	16
Dec 10	2	4	0	0	6
Dec 11	4	7	0	1	12
					34

Out of 34 birds only three (3) were immature, attesting to the very poor nesting season of 1972.

Prospects for 1973 are good, however. Over 4" of rain already has fallen at Ike's and with normal addition in mid-winter we may have a good year for forbs. Carry-over of breeders is quite good Ike has 500+ in home covey and perhaps 300 in eucalyptus canyon + 100 in tallows.

We had done fine dog work from Ring and Barney – scarcely lost a cripple and shot a good number of birds over points.

ICE!

Sorensons
Dec 16, 1972

Put Gordy DeLeath in no. 6 blind and I went to no. 5, then changed over to no 4. The pond was heavily encased in ice with a small open hole in front of no. 1 blind. Ducks came to that hole but no-one could break ice to reach no. 1 barrel (which was full of water and required bailing). The other blinds had no flight at all. In no. 6 Gordy got a spring and a widgeon, in no. 2 Woody took one widgeon, and I was skunked in the south blinds. Ted killed two springs from the levee back of no. 1. There seem to be plenty of birds in the country but we couldn't get at them. Quite a few geese around too but they weren't coming down around us.

Went back to the clubhouse late in the morning and thawed out with some booze and a bit of lunch. We had a group of 7 pheasant hunters ready to go but about 11:00 AM it started to rain and settled into a downpour. We sat around for an hour or so and then gave it up and headed home.

In spite of the ice there were quite a few jacksnipe around the S end of our pond and in the reed canary grass pasture where we park. I was just too damned cold to try to hit them.

7 sprigs
3 Yellow-legs

Sorenson

Dec. 27, 1972

Ice is melted, and after a week of no hunting (season closed Dec. 18-26) the waterfowl are gathered all over the property in great abundance — geese as well as ducks. However, this morning brought a heavy ground fog and for a couple of hours we had little action. Then at 9:30 fog began to lift over our pond and Ted in No. 2 and I (#6) limited in an hour on beautiful fat sprigs. Drakes have their pin-tails and we saw many courting parties of sprigs as well as widgeon. Both Ted and I passed a number of chances at geese, including some honkers.

After lunch we went for pheasants — Bladding, Colby and myself. We worked hard in the standing corn (mud was awful) and got 7 birds between us but saw literally hundreds. Big flocks would roll from the corn when they heard us coming but as usual we never could surround them. About 2:30 we all watched a marsh hawk try to take a white-tailed kite. He chased the kite through a long series of twisting dips and actually caught it by one wing but at that moment a second kite attacked the harrier from above and it let go. The kite appeared injured as it flew away, accompanied by its savior. The harrier gave it up and left in the opposite direction.

Grass Valley - Marysville foothills and Aloha Club.
Dec 29-30, 1972

Hunted quail with Peter McBean, Dec. 29 on the Rancho Cordornices near Grass Valley and Dec 30 at Sugarloaf with Ray Conaway. We found 5 nice coveys first day and killed:

Ad		Im		Tot
♂	♀	♂	♀	
2	2	4	7	= 15

At Conaway place we took 20 birds, mostly from one big covey. Ray kept the sex-age tally and will supply data later for whole season. He is running 1½ to 2 young per adult — not as good as we are getting at Penobscot ranch. Took some black & white photos of Conaway's trench filter where we did all our shooting. Conaway seeds his managed areas with sub-clover, a high producer of steroids.

Saturday morning, Dec. 30, we shot ducks at the Aloha Club, District 10, near Oroville. Tremendous concentration of birds on their flooded rice and I had no trouble getting 7 sprigs in less than an hour. Could have killed 7 greenhead mallards in even less time. Big concentration of snow geese and specs but they stayed high until the shooting subsided, whereupon they returned to the grounds. Green-wing teal and shovelers were abundant, widgeon comparatively scarce.

4 Valsz pheasants

Sorenson's
Jan 1, 1973

New Years day fell on Monday so we came up for a go at the pheasants. I took Dennis Seegmiller and his son Jason as my guests. Woody M. is over his Mexican sickness and put in a good hunt with us. We surrounded the SE corner of uncut corn and I came up through it with them, driving birds over the guns posted along the N edge. Jumped perhaps 100 birds and they offered considerable sporting pass shooting with a minimum of bloodshed. Next we did the SW corner in much the same way, with another 75 birds or so flushed. We then made two passes through the middle field with similar results. Our total bag was 9 pheasants of which Woody took 5. I shot only three shells and took two birds. We lunched on a stormy ditchbank and listened to the Rose Bowl game on the way home.

Tremendous concentration of ducks and geese on the whole grounds. Great majority of the ducks were spring. On one pond there were several hundred around #4 blind and scattered birds elsewhere. The really big gang was on Gilmore pond and on Little Joe's. Marvelous sight.

We jumped only two jacksnipe while pheasant hunting. Saw one loose group of 21 white-tailed kites.

7 Sprigs
3 Valsac pheasants
3 snipe

Sorenson's
Jan 3, 1973

Full house today — Game warden Bill Donovan and his son in No 5, Bill Hastings in No 4, Woody and Alan Furman in No. 2 Cabin, and I held down no. 6. Ted had to go elsewhere for his shoot. Lots of birds in the air and everyone limited by noon. Old Bill had a helluva shoot in 4 and was out with 7 sprigs before 8:30. The proportion of widgeon is very high and of course they work right over the blinds or even land in the decoys while you keep your eyes glued on some far-away sprig, hoping he'll get a little lower and come your way. Also lots of teal and shovelers, the latter drakes in full plumage looking very handsome. A good many geese flying around high but they are not using down on their ranch as they often do late in the season.

After finishing my lunch shoot I took three jacksnipe in the reed canary grass near our parking lot. Saw about a dozen in all.

After lunch we surrounded the Valsac corn fields and took a dozen birds or so. Bing is home, sick with bronchitis — first time in memory that I have hunted pheasants without my own dog. Was lucky to pick up three birds, all dropped in standing corn. Lost only one.

7 sprig
2 Valese pheasants
4 snipe

Sorenson
Jan 6, 1973

Another good flight today with limits of sprig all around. Ted was out first from no. 4 and I finished at no. 6 before 10:00 Bon. Woody and Hal Haley did OK in the double but split up to finish. Again I went for snipe and took 4 straight in the reed canary field. Not over 15 birds there in all, none in S end of our pond. Another big flight of widgeon - sprig - teal. We had no large flights of sprig - just little dribbler. Many geese went over high and a few low over - I passed close shots at 4 mow and 2 lesser Canadas.

Two of us went for Valsac pheasants with the avowed purpose of putting some birds in Morris Cox's locker - he had taken home only 4 of his quota of 40. We worked the corn driver to perfection, having a helluva lot of powder and carrying out 23 birds of which we gave Cox 16. I shot 11 straight without a missed shell or a lost cripple. Meg is back in service and made some very fancy retrieves in the corn and heavy understory of watergrass. We still have hundreds - perhaps thousands - of pheasants concentrated in the uncut corn. Fields are dry enough to harvest now and they have about half of it cut.

Saw some goose droppings and feathers in the cut corn indicating that they have found the bonanza

7 cock spring
4 Valsac pheasants

Sorenson

Jan 10, 1973

I went to #4, just Bordy McPeak in no. 2 double and Ted was in no. 6. As it turned out I had the only good duck shoot on the whole ranch! It has rained several inches in the past few days and the whole valley is sodden. As I went to my blind I could hear the high hum of thousands of ducks sitting in a wet pasture South of our pond about ¼ mile. At #4 I was close enough to get the spin-off of birds cruising around that mob and I had 7 fat cocks by 5:30. They were definitely responding to a spring whistle and I called in several singles and pairs. McPeak had had virtually no shooting in #2 so I called him down when I left #4, whereupon the fog which had been 100 yds. or more above the ground descended to the surface and there was no shooting until it lifted again at 11:30. At noon Bordy quit with 1 spring and 1 widgeon.

After I left the blind I took along a big circuit South & over ahead to try to drive the mob of ducks up toward the boys. I found where they had trampled a pasture to a soggy mess but the birds had all left. Found about 50 mallards in the old Rupp pond now grazed down close, without cover. Jumped only two jacksnipe on the whole circuit.

Another good day after pheasants except that this time we had to Tramp through sticky mud.

Sorenson

Jan 13, 1973

Continued rain in the Valley and Sierra foothills has created flood conditions and we received warning that the by-pass would go under, probably Sunday Jan. 14. Woody McPeak, Ted, and I showed up for a final try at the ducks Sat. morning but heavy continuous fog defeated us. I took one spring in #5 and Ted made a double in #4. Woody did not fire his gun in #2. A few sprinter loomed out of the fog and that was about all.

We started picking up decoys at 10 AM and cleared #4 and #5 first. Woody came along then and helped us with the remainder. By 1 PM we had stripped all the blinds of floor boards, seats etc. and had all decoys racked and stored away in the clubhouse for another year.

Looking back over the whole season, I think we did pretty well and have no reason to complain. Heavy rains the first two weeks put us off to a slow start, the freeze in our level Oct 21 hurt some, and the hard freeze in mid-December was not good. But we made up for these shortcomings with some excellent shooting in January. My season tally was 72 sprigs, 4 mallards, 3 widgeon, 3 G.W. teal and 1 goose.

Penobscot Ranch

Jan 20, 21, 1973

Bob McLoy and I started in the blackberry jungles on E edge of the ranch. Lost one covey of 25 birds (near dry pond) that cut across the line fence into Auburn Farm property. Flushed the big covey as always on the W edge of oak knoll and scattered some of them but lost the main covey again. I think they cross "duck pond" and run down the draw toward the barns. We took 9 quail and one lone jacksnipe before lunch. After lunch we had severe car trouble (flooded carburetor) and spent whole afternoon at a garage in Georgetown getting it fixed.

Next morning hunted down toward "mallard pond" but found only scattered bits of coveys — no birds at all in the main blackberry row down the stream. I think other hunters have been here recently.

Bag for two days:

	Adult		Immature		Total
	♂	♀	♂	♀	
Jan. 20	2	1	2	4	= 9
Jan 21	3	-	1	2	= 6

It snowed some the night of Jan 20 and the grass was soggy second day, making for poor holding of birds — they ran right out of solid points, just like pheasants.

The McMillans ranch, Shandon

Jan. 26, 27 and 28, 1973

I visited the shooting season with a three day spree with the gang at Abe's and at Hunter Liggett Military reservation near Jolon.

First day (1/26) we scattered the covey at Abe's eucalyptus grove and enjoyed some good dog work in grass along the draw. Second day (1/27) Abe had a lot of guests and busted the home covey up toward the old house, scattering a couple of hundred of them on the slopes of the road. I worked Riz alone on one edge of the gang and shot 6 birds, all on solid points. If he pointed a point I wouldn't shoot.

Bag for Jan 27 and 28:

	Adult		Jun.		Tot.
	♂	♀	♂	♀	
Jan 27 (home covey)	22	15	0	2	39
Jan 28 (Hunter Liggett)	5	7	3	1	16

Last day we drove to Hunter Liggett and hunted ridges a few miles NE of headquarters. The area which had been lightly grazed for years is being heavily punished by Mexican steers. We are filing complaints with the military. Still we found three coveys (25, 40, 10) and took 16 birds, many over good points.

Saw a dozen deer but no pigs.

Hewlett - Packard Ranch, San Felipe
Sept. 7-8-9, 1973

Because of my spinal surgery a month ago I can barely walk but Bill Hewlett convinced me to come anyway for the annual deer hunt. Present: Bill Hewlett, Dave Packard, Ken Norrish, Otto Miller, + son Tony, Bob Brown, Bob Marble, Ernie Arbuckle, and BSL. Invited but absent because his father died last week - Bud Zumwalt, Admiral of the Navy.

The deer hunting was tough, and only 3 bucks were taken — full moon, hot dry weather, and deer apparently bushed up in deep canyons.

But I hunted doves and had a ball - got 29 birds in three days. Shot two evenings at a water hole (trout pond - head of the valley) and one morning (Sat.) in feeding area. I sat on a ditch bank in a bit of cover while the birds worked up and down the dry pasture lightly grown to star thistle and heavily grazed - much bare ground. Crops of birds more than half filled with star thistle seeds; a less important food was small shiny black seed (like pigweed) which I did not recognize. More than half the birds were females.

Last year Bill put up a dozen wood duck boxes at my suggestion, and 4 different flocks (5 to 10) of ducks were seen. The foreman saw ducks using one box.

1 Spnj
1 Wedgeon
1 G.W. teal

Sorenson

Oct 20, 1973

Opening day, but our pond was only 1/3 full and not many ducks were using it. I sat in no. 6 which was surrounded by mud, grass and a few shallow puddles. Decoys were largely sitting in grass. Had only a few pass shots. Water was short on the whole property and I didn't hear of anyone that killed a limit, on Sorenson's or the Mound Farms. At 10 o'clock we quit and Woody put out the Stick-up decoys near the middle of our pond, but without water he couldn't be sure where the ultimate edge would be.

After a drink at the clubhouse we went for pheasants. Since I cannot walk after spinal surgery Aug. 8 they let me sit at Wedge 7 Sacramento Pond while the gang come through from the East. The Sacramento is in uncut wild rice which shattered to the ground before harvest. About 80 to 100 pheasants were flushed and everyone had shooting. I shot 4 shells at passing birds and killed 3 roosters — all wild birds. One nice overhead double on birds coming very fast — great way to hunt pheasants if you have friends that will drive for you.

At the pond only saw 4 jacksnipe but there were 100 or more in big bunches on the Sacramento, recently arrived I would presume.

Sorenson's

no ducks
3 Valsac pheasants

Oct 27 and 28, 1973

Although the ponds are now full we have no ducks on either Sorenson or Mound Farms properties. Sat, Oct. 31, Ted Woody Betty and I were all skunked — first time in memory. Sunday was about the same.

Hunted some pheasants Sunday — corn still uncut and most of the birds are spending the day therein. We found enough outside the corn for a nice shoot.

6 spngs
2 Valsac pheasants

Oct 31, 1973

Tried the Wednesday shoot and now for the first time we are in the duck business. I went into no. 4 and Jim Morrish in no. 6. We both limited by 9 Am despite losing an hour and a half waiting for the fog to burn off. Ken had one canvasback in his limit — rest spngs.

There are some snipe in our marsh but I can't walk enough to hunt them.

6 spngs
4 Valsac pheasants

Nov 3, 1973

Another fine spngs shoot in no 4 — I took all coches (10 shells). Woody also limited in no 2 and later no. 6. Lee Richardson was Cox's guest and came on the pheasant shoot with us, carrying a camera. I took 4 coches, three of them on pass shots.

Sorenson
Nov 7, 1973

Hard rain for last couple of days but it quit today. Fair duck flight — I got a limit in no. 4 with 8 shells. McPeak had 4 in no. 2 and Ted took 3 in no. 6 but quit early so as not to "bore" his new Lab puppy. Had he stayed another hour he could have limited easily. Heavy overhead flight of spring South bound (into the wind). Some may have been new arrivals.

Few snipe left on our marsh — rain probably scatter them over the pasturelands. Tremendous flight of rough-legged hawks last week end and again today. Curiously I haven't seen a white-tailed kite so far this season.

2 mallards
1 Valeac pheasant

Nov 17, 1973

Took Lena out for a duck hunt but we sat in a deluge of rain and there was no flight at all. I had one shot in no. 4 and doubled on mallards. We have the word that the by-pass will go under so we spent the latter half of the morning picking up decoys and wiring the lids on the blinds.

Had our annual elk stew Friday evening. While I cooked the stew, Woody took Lena pheasant hunting and he got one rooster in the rain and mud.

Penobscot Ranch

November 22-23, 1973

Invited the Middletowns to Penobscot for our traditional Thanksgiving grail hunt. Poured rain all morning Thanksgiving day but windy and I waited it out and killed only a dozen birds in the afternoon. Wet birds are nearly impossible to dislodge from a dense blackberry thicket — they just crouch there and let you beat the edges and throw rocks all you want.

Friday we hunted the hills near the Mallard pond and added five more birds for a total of 11.

	Adult ♂	Adult ♀	Immature ♂	Immature ♀	Total
Nov 22-23	1	2	4	4	= 11

It did not rain on Friday but the grass was wet and birds refused to hold — they hit the ground running and flushed wild when you followed them.

Saw a few deer and lots of deer sign — most of it in the Ceanothus cuneatus near Mallard Pond. Although this is prime feeding area for wintering deer they must bed higher in the hills for we jumps very few. Also saw a coyote, and a few ducks on Mallard Pond (7 wood ducks and 3 hooded mergansers including one beautiful little drake).

Penobscot Ranch

Nov 1 and 2, 1973

Josh Lewis up for a quail weekend. Hunted Mallard Pond area Saturday but it rained intermittently and we had the usual difficulty getting birds to hold. We jumped perhaps 50 to 60 birds, in three coveys. Afternoon we drove up the ridge to the East but found only one little bunch of a dozen or so birds. I think the population this year is far below normal. Our total bag for the day was 7.

Sunday broke clear and sunny and we parked in the saddle overlooking Auburn Trails property (this is our usual first day hunt). The birds and the cover were dry and we did much better. Found the birds broken into several groups in blackberries below the oak knoll but in all I guess we were chasing 60 birds around. We took 15 including one "double-double" — a group of six came out under Lewis's feet and we each killed a clean double, four dead birds.

Total kill for the week end:

Adult		Immature		Total
♂	♀	♂	♀	
6	3	6	7	= 22

Again I felt that this population is scarcely half what we usually find.

Saturday PM we were checked by a personable and gracious young game warden — Bob ——?

3 mallard
3 spriz

Sorensons

Dec 15, 1973

The flood in the Ky-pass finally receded, and Woody and Ted have boiled our barrels and put out the decoys. I went into #6 this morning and took a nice limit of mallards and spriz by 11:15. Woody limited in #2 and Ted shot quite a bit in no. 1 but only bagged one spriz. Big concentration of birds on the Gilmore pond (Still flooded) and many counting parties of spriz sallying over our way. Lots of geese in the area too but none came down to shooting range. They seem to be ganged up on the Island or in Little Holland — you could hear them talking somewhere to the southeast.

Dec 16, 1973 2 spriz

Sent my birds home with Woody and stayed over for another try at the spriz. The fog was lower today (yesterday it stayed high) and there was mighty little action. I took two spriz in #6 and Ted had three in #4. Fog lifted just about noon and some birds began to work the pond, but by then we were out of the blinds.

John Bosche shot on Gilmore and took a limit but the big mob of birds just moved over to Little Holland which reduced the "fly-off" flight at our pond.

1 Spring
1 Valley pheasant

Sacramento

Dec 19, 1973

Took Dave Taylor up as a guest but the flight was very poor. Fog stayed low until noon at which point when we were on the road Spring began to materialize — too late again! I'm going to press for afternoon shooting next year, at least on Wednesdays and Sundays.

Dave had only one shot in no 2 and took a nice cock Spring, which is what I had in no. 6. Ted had three in no. 4. Hellmuth day to bring a guest.

After lunch I took Dave and Dennis up to Valley Pond a couple of birds at the dead cottonwood and Dave took a cock. Along the north ditch they jumped 50 birds or so, all wild — no shooting. Grass was wet and they refused to lay. They put up a little flock of mallards and bagged a couple. I went into Sacramento pond where a mob of birds was concentrated on the wild rice and shot a widgeon and a ring-neck to send home with Dave.

1 young spec

Dec 22, 1973

Low heavy fog again. I set in #4 and had a single shot at a spec, which I scratched down. Ted had a mean goose in no. 4. No ducks at all. Again as we left the marsh at noon the fog lifted and Spring and widgeon began working in, some actually lighting in no. 4.

Sacramento

Dec 26, 1973

Brought Fritz up for a duck shoot which didn't materialize. He got 1 widgeon in #6 while I had two long shots in #4 and took two cocks Spring. Big deal! We stayed in the blinds till 12:30 to test the hypothesis that a flight always started at noon. Today it didn't When the fog started to lift it began to rain.

At lunch we learned that the Sacramento River is in flood again and our place is expected to go under in the next few days. So in the afternoon in a driving son-of-a-bitch of a rain, Ted, Fritz and I picked up the decoys, stripped the blinds and hauled everything in to the clubhouse, finishing about dark. This flood will probably end the shooting season for us.

Some ideas for next year:

1. Put out more stick-up decoys and use fewer floating ones. Quicker and easier to pick up and probably more effective.
2. Put butterfly valves on the two south inlet-outlet pipes and a weir on the north end to stabelize our water level. The ranch help just can't seem to regulate water any more.

Penobscot

Dec 28, 1973

Jerry, Kris Betty and I spent week end in pursuit of the wily quail. Saturday we hunted the hills N and E of Mallard Pond and jumped 3 (or maybe 4) small coveys of 15 to 25 birds each. Grass was wet and the birds did not hold well but Jerry got plenty of shooting — much of it long. I couldn't keep up with the hunt but got in a few shots. Our kill:

Ad		Im		Total
♂	♀	♂	♀	
5	0	1	0	= 6

On Sunday we started early to hunt the upper (E) blackberry meadow but stuck the car trying to get up the hill and ended up spending the whole morning getting out. Finally had to call a wrecker with a winch.

After lunch after the car was safely deposited on a firm road but then it started to rain so we drove home without ever getting up the guns.

Ike McMillan, Brandon

Jan 6 to 10, 1974

Brought Mike Erwin down to Ike's to do a bit of quail hunting and to go over plans for the quail book.

Shot a few birds near Old house on Sunday afternoon. Then Monday rained torrents all day so we sat in front of the fire and went through the book 135, page by page. Made lots of plans.

Weather cleared Tuesday and we had a fine hunt at the Deer Field on Sinton's ranch. Wednesday the 2nd Ray had one of their big quail festivals with all the Sintons and a big dinner after the hunt.

Age ratio is very high in young this year around the managed properties (Ike, Sinton) but curiously is not nearly so good in the Pine Hills or Fernandez Place. Mike saw lots of young birds there in summer and early fall. We cannot account for their absence in the winter bags.

Ike performed very well, in fact I thought he handled birds better than Ike's pointers, though he doesn't get much practice.

Big blocks of this country are being converted to grapes — won't do the wildlife much good I'm afraid.

West Betten Pond

Season-1973-74
Daily-6
Possession-6

Date Guest 1973	Pintail	Mallard	Widgeon	C. Teal	G.W.Teal	Ringneck	Woodduck	Jacksnipe	Pheasant	Other Ducks	Total	Geese
Oct. 20	1		1		1				3		3	
Oct 27									1		0	
Oct 28									3		0	
Oct 31	6								2		6	
Nov 3	6								4		6	
Nov 7	6								1		6	
Nov 17		2							1		2	
Dec 15	3	3									6	
Dec 16 Dec 19	2 1								1		3 1	1 Snow
Dec 22											0	1 Snow
Dec 26	2										2	
									14 pheasants			
27	5	1			1						34 ducks 1 Snow	

Bk 7 spring
5 Volsac pheasants

Sorenson's

Oct 23, 1974

I missed opening weekend because of a meeting in Miami of Marine Mammal Commission. But today I was sure on hand. Betty and I went to no.5 where Ted did well last Sunday. Found the water low — mostly mud around the blind - and few birds worked in early. I took two high over, then moved to #4 where I got three more in 15 minutes. So I sent Betty to 4 and finished up my limit in 5. Betty had some good shots in 4 but couldn't seem to connect.

The spring flight was fantastic all morning, until 10 AM. There was scarcely a moment when birds weren't circling our pond — often flocks of hundreds. I feel very strongly that our big spread of stick-ups in the middle of the pond is the key. We now have about 250 of them in addition to 500 floating decoys. All in all a pretty impressive spread.

I would judge over 95% of the birds in our area are spring — a very few mallards, widgeon, g-w teal and shovelers and one little flock of cans (passing over high).

After some drinks and lunch Woody, Maurice, Betty and I made a pass at the pheasants. We took 8 in an hour around the hot corner and nearby ditches. Woody did some magnificent work on pointing and retrieving.

Saw 4 jacksnipe near #5.

Sorensons

6 sprigs
3 Valley pheasants

Oct 26, 1974

Cloudy skies and a brisk SW breeze. There were plenty of sprigs in the air but they showed little interest in our pond most of the morning. At 11 AM (daylight savings) the sky cleared and sun hit the pond and the decoys, whereupon flocks began working to the pond as they did last Wednesday. Most of our shooting came between 11 and noon quitting time.

None of us got a limit. I was high in #2 with 6 birds. The other members got 4, 3 and 2 respectively. The opening week "honeymoon" is over.

Saw no gadwalls at all.

After lunch we made a pass at the pheasants. Found a dozen birds in "dead cottonwood corner" and I took three cocks there and quit. Worked several ditches and everyone had shooting. North ditch in particular was loaded.

Venison stew for dinner.

Oct 27, 1974

2 sprigs

Very few birds came back to the ranch overnight. I stayed two hours in #4 and had one shot which yielded a double on cock sprigs. When I left at 8:00 AM there were scarcely any birds in the air. Other hunters checking in early reported little action, although Sherm Chischering had a good shoot on the Kilmore Pond.

At 9:30 I set out for Alamosa and a quail hunt.

4/quail

Fred Allen Ranch, 5 mi. NW Dunnigan, Yolo Co.
Oct 27, 1974

Had my first quail hunt on the Allen ranch (460A±) where I have taken a shooting lease this year. Betty and I had a good dove shoot there Sept 1 and 2.

Most of the ranch is in wheat but two draws cross the property, fringed with heavy chemise and a few oaks and digger pines. One pond in the middle is the principal water source.

I worked the more northerly draw and found two coveys of 25 and 35 birds, both loafing in chemise patches. I took a pair of birds from each covey:

Ad ♂	Ad ♀	Juv ♂	Juv ♀	Total
2	0	0	2	= 4

Both coveys scattered in dense tall chemise where dog points are virtually impossible. The dog chases around in the chemise as flushed birds which I try to intercept — not the greatest set-ups in the world for good dog work. Moreover, down birds in the tall dense chemise are damned hard to retrieve, as were today when hot dry conditions made dog scenting very difficult. I lost two down birds that may have run but should have been retrievable if conditions were right. The area is not grazed and there is plenty of dense grass cover but the birds won't scatter there, choosing the chemise instead.

BK
Ken Morrish } 12 Spring

Sorenson

Oct 30, 1974

Rain Sprall & Mon-Tues. passed, and Wed. Bon broke partly cloudy with a brisk S wind, changing to W in mid-morning.

Ken and I shot the #2 double and had occasional shots from daylight to 9:30 AM when birds quit working. We shot well to get a dozen birds, mostly on both swing shots as flocks worked the stick-up decoys and the main pond. Ted had much more action in #6 and limited by 8:30. No sprigs actually made deliberate passes over our decoy spread. There was very little action at the S end of the pond. Dennis was in no. 4 and ended with one bird. Water level was high.

Virtually all birds in the air are still sprigs - no singles yet & small ducks. Nor did I see a single pachyuncle, although Bob DeLong had a fair shoot at Grizzly Island today.

After leaving the blinds we rearranged the stick-up decoys, moving them off open water into the grass. Then we had lunch, plucked all the birds and went home early. Did not go for pheasants.

Little Joe shot a handsome drake wood duck.

1952 5 sprigs
2 Wilson Jobs.

Sorenson

Nov 2, 1974

Started in no. 5 but didn't have a shot for two hours. When Ted finished his limit about 8 AM in #6 I moved in there and took five sprigs by 10 AM. In the meantime, Glenn had given up on no 4 and moved to no 1 but had no shooting there either. At 10 AM I moved him over to no. 6 so that he might at least have a shot or so. There was a brisk N breeze after 8 AM but even this didn't pull any birds into no 1. Woody and Ward Russell had shooting all morning in the no. 2 double and came out with a limit about 11 AM. I am worried about the lack of action in our South blinds but trust things will get better as the season progresses. At the moment we seem to have only two functional blinds — 2 and 6.

After lunch we went out for pheasants and found a good scattering of birds along the ditches, from dead cottonwood corner to the north ditch. I took two cocks at the corner and thereupon carried a camera. It was hot and dry and not very good for dog work but Meg made a classic point on a wild cock with four of us standing around in a circle. We got the bird.

Still no sign of jacksnipe (I jumped one).

BR - 7 Sprigs
B. McPeak - 7 Sprigs
+ 4 Valsac pheasants

Swenson
Nov. 6, 1974

Josh Bondy ~~out~~ at no. 2 double and Dennis went at no 6. Heavy fog for about two hours in the early morning but when it broke about 8:00 there was a deadly flight all morning. Bondy and I finished our limits about 10:30. Dennis had as many chances as we did but was not shooting well and came out with 2 sprigs. Again, all the action was on the main pond, with only an occasional flight using the south end. A little group of 4 canvasbacks bugged us twice but we held off shooting at them. Later I learned that they went on to the north ponds and Vern Swenson bagged one.

Last Saturday there were quite a few geese in the air (specs mostly) with the north wind. Today there was scarcely any wind and no geese flew at all. Neither did I see any jacksnipe. Ducks still 95% sprigs with only a scattering of mallards and small ducks.

After lunch we had a whirl at pheasants and took two birds apiece. Dennis released 100 birds at noon near the cottonwood corner so we avoided that locality, hunting only the ditches to the north. Still a good scatter of birds there.

7 spruce
1 Valsse pheasant
6 snipe

Sorensons
Nov 10, 1974

Woody and I were alone on the pond this morning (Sunday) and the flight was very odd, working in to no. 6 beautifully and not at all to other blinds. I sat in the no. 2 double and watched Woody fill his limit in no. 6 while I had only a few scratch shots. When he left the blind at 9:00 I moved over and finished my limit by 10:00. Birds were still working in until nearly noon, while we were snipe hunting in the South end.

A fair flight of jacksnipe apparently came in toward the end of the week. We found about 15 or so birds in the S end of the pond and took 5 of them by working down wind (clear, sunny, brisk NE breeze). After lunch we went to Volga where Woody saw some snipe yesterday, but only jumped 6 or so, of which we killed one. Woody gave me the whole snipe bag to make a mess.

We did no serious pheasant hunting but I took one big cock in the dead cottonwood corner.

There still are very few small ducks about and this is true of Gray Lodge where I took the 170 class yesterday — 90+ to spring, most of the rest mallards. Fair number of specs going over high and one flock of about 30 canvasbacks

7 sprigs
3 Valsae phasianto
5 jacksnipe

Sorenson

Nov 16, 1974

(+7 sprigs Ken Morrish)

Kenny and I started in #2 double with Woody in #6. The flight oriented toward Woody and we only had two birds when he left 6 with a limit, so I sent Ken over. But a big mob (2000+) had accumulated back of #4 and they were sucking the circling birds down there. I left the double and went down to 4, driving out a black cloud of ducks. Thereafter I limited in 20 minutes and Ken got shooting at 6, finishing his limit about 10:30. When we saw him leaving the blind, Woody and I went snipe hunting, bagging 5 in our South end and down toward the car park. There must have been 40 to 50 snipe in there. It was a dark hazy day though, with poor visibility and snipe jumping wild.

Friday afternoon Ken and I gave the Valsae phasianto a whirl, bagging 3 along the two southernmost ditches and dead cottonwood corner. Only a couple of snipe seen there.

Geese are beginning to work the Sorenson property. Two separate groups of snows came right by us in #2 and a little gaggle of 3 snows lit in our decoys. We didn't shoot though. Little Joe got a cackler.

6 spigs
3 pheasants (free)
8 snipe

Sorenson
Nov 23, 1974

I shot very poorly in #6 blind. Couldn't make a clean kill with my right barrel and sent several cripples scaling off, all of which I picked up later with Kling. Flight was good at #6 although no birds worked in close — all 50 yard stuff. At #2 Harold Healy had only a couple of scratch shots. Woody got a few birds in #4.

On leaving the blinds we shot a few snipe in one south pond. There were at least 50 there. After that we drove the ditch to the E of the pond for pheasants and I got 2 cocks, Woody another two.

After lunch Woody and I put in a serious afternoon of snipe hunting on the Eeles property, mostly west of #90 pond. There were several hundred snipe in there, and though a bit wild we had plenty of shooting. Warm sunny still day without a breeze. I think a bit of wind would have helped us get closer. Saw quite a few pheasants up there and I picked up another rooster with a load of 6's at 40 yds.

Lots of geese and swans in the air, all flying very high. Geese mostly specs but a good scattering of swans in with the flocks. Not many cutlers yet.

2 Sprig
1 widgeon
3 Snipe

Sorenson

Nov 24, 1974

At #4 I had only a few scratch shots but came out with 2 nice cock sprigs and a widgeon. In the latter case, 3 birds came out of the glare of the sun cutting through the fog and when I shot head-on the bird folded and I saw instantly that it was a widgeon so did not shoot again. When I looked back at the other two birds leaving they were a pair of sprigs!

I shot a few more snipe as we made our way back to the car.

7 Sprigs

Nov 27, 1974

I shot #6 again and this time my shooting was excellent — 8 birds with 12 shells including three high doubles. The extra bird was a cripple that sailed off through the fog and was picked up by dog near #5 blind as I went out. Gave it to Dennis.

Did not go for snipe or pheasants but went home early.

Few geese or ducks in the air today and still very few curlews.

1 spring
8 snipe (with Luna)
6 Valsa pheasants

24 miles.

Sorensons

Nov 30, 1974

Josh Luna to #2 double and had no shooting at all. Luna didn't fire a shot and I took a long poke at a cock spring leaving the pond after Woody shot and scaled him down dead behind #1. Woody got only 3 springs in #6.

We mobilized a gang about 11:00 AM and went after Valsa pheasants. Lots of birds are crowded into our ditches by virtue of clean following of all the Elba corn fields plus open pheasant shooting in properties surrounding Valsa. There must have been 100 pheasants in dead cottonwood corner alone. Luna and I took 4 cocks and 2 hens.

Then we went for snipe in the NW corner of Elba property where Woody and I had a good shoot last week. About the same number of birds were still there and we shot up a storm, taking 8 between us. Luna also jumped a fine fat cock spring from a hole in the tules and bagged him. Forgot to say he shot a crippled hen canvasback that he drove off our pond border when he was going back for the car in the morning.

The two-hour fog this AM probably depressed the duck shooting considerably — nothing came down till nearly 9 AM and then they worked our pond poorly.

7 Spnigs
2 Valeas pheasants

Sorenson
Dec 7, 1974

No fog this morning for a change, but the flight to our pond was light. I limited on spnigs in #6 by virtue of some good shooting (two doubles included) while Woody only had one shot in #2. He came over to #6 when I left and picked up 4 spnigs by waiting all morning till quitting time at noon. There would have been little or no action in the South Islands.

As I sat at the S end of our pond picking ducks I watched a heavy and continuous flight of north bound ducks passing several miles to the east of us. About 11:30 a brisk N breeze sprang up which presumably had been blowing all along at high levels guiding the N bound flights.

After lunch we hunted pheasants with Cox and Colby. I took a pair of birds and quit. Again there was a good concentration at dead cottonwood corner. They escaped to the Eastward along the big levee.

After that Woody and I returned to the pond and re-set the decoys at #2 hoping to improve its appeal. Also chopped down the big clumps of reed canary grass to lower the profile of the blind island.

4 grail
1 dove

Allen ranch near Hannigan

Dec 8, 1974

Heavy fog at Emerson so I left at 8:00 am and drove to Hannigan for some grail.

Bing and I located some birds along the main wash near the west line fence but neither of us could ever make the covey fly. They just milled around in the tall chamise or hopped up in little short flights ahead of the dog. Never did see the covey.

Then Fred Allen joined me and we hunted up the wash on Green's property. We found birds all the way along — some birds ahead of us up the chamise slopes — but we never scattered a covey and had little shooting. Came back to the car at 1:30 with three birds between us. A guest of Fred showed up with another dog and we worked a fine big covey at mouth of the S wash (near Fred's trailer). There were perhaps 100+ in the bunch and they did scatter but again in heavy chamise most of the singles ran or otherwise failed us. We came out of that with 7 more birds. Days total:

Ad		Im		Tot.
♂♂	♀♀	♂♂	♀♀	
3	1	2	4	= 10

Bing was completely exhausted from trying to overrun birds in that damn chamise. I don't think that's a fit place to grail hunt.

Ike McWilliams

Dec 14-17, 1974

Mike Erwin and I spent four nice days with Ike and Mary, harassing the quail some and puttering about the countryside.

This was a quail year rather than a pack year, despite the good rainfall, so the quail crop was not very good. About half young / half adults in the bag (lower than that in Ike's home covey). I suspect an inversity factor in reproduction of the very high population around Ike's. Ground cover is recovering in the Piney burn and we had one good shoot in deer weed (Lotus) near the Eagle nest. The eagles were about, incidentally, and we saw several prairie falcons and lots of rough legs during the four days.

DSL - 7 coch spring
8 Snipe
LBL - 3 coch spring
4 Snipe

Sorenson
Dec 21, 1974

Good south breeze today and the fog, though heavy, was a couple of hundred yards high so birds worked down through it. I started in #5 but had only one shot by 8:45 so I moved to the #2 double where I finished a limit of coch spring by 11:15. Lynn had plenty of birds milling around #6 but he was waiting for them to "come in", which of course they never did. When he started taking them at 40 to 50 yds he got three nice cochs. Dennis had a fine early shoot in #4 with several hundred birds acting as decoys in the SW corner of the pond in back of him. When finally he frightened them off, his shooting virtually ceased. He came out with 5 birds.

Very heavy flight of spring today but they were extremely cautious in working our pond. Lots of widgeon and shovelers and enormous numbers of green-winged teal, as well as a few cinnamons.

After lunch Lynn and I went back to the S end of our pond and to our surprise and delight we found at least 75 snipe there. We chased them around for two hours and took a dozen birds between us. Lack of rain apparently is keeping the snipe close around existing duck ponds.

4 Spnige
2 mallard

Sorenson

Dec 28, 1974

A wild, stormy day with 40 mi. north wind and driving rain until mid-morning. It was cold too - not much above freezing. I hunkered down in no. 6 barrel with bling at my feet and an umbrella to keep dry and break the wind. There was a heavy flight of ducks but the vast majority of them were shovelers and green-winged teal. Relatively few spnige and widgeon, and an occasional mallard. They weren't exactly easy to hit in that wind either, and I missed several close birds that flared but did get two doubles.

Dennis started out in no. 4 and in the wind I couldn't hear him shoot, but I could tell when he did by the violent upward flaring of the birds. He moved to no. 2 and finished with 5 birds.

By 10 o'clock I was so cold that I had to quit looking a bird of the limit. I went out then and picked up my birds and to my surprise a marsh hawk had largely consumed the breast of one of them. I figured birds floating in the water were safe, but this hawk was riding the spnig like a boat, chewing hunks out of the breast when I drove him off.

Very few geese or swans in the air today. Saw one little wisp of 5 jacksnipe.

4 sprig
3 g-w teal
1 snipe

Sorensons

Jan 11, 1975

Set out this morning with the objective of taking a limit of teal (5) plus two sprigs. Clear skies and a north breeze stimulated a magnificent flight from daylight till 8:30 and lighter thereafter - mostly sprig. The big bunches of teal and shovelers seen here two weeks ago have vanished — moved on south I suppose. I took my two cocks sprigs early and then sat there for an hour and a half waiting for teal, with sprigs flapping all over the south end of the pond. I was in #5, Klemin in #4, and there was no doubt we were getting more action than the main pond blinds. Finally at 9 o'clock I decided I had better take a few sprigs which I did, finishing the limit with only 3 teal, the rest sprigs.

There were lots of geese about - mostly Canadas - using the sheep pastures to the west of our property across the big levee. They made occasional high passes over us but nothing in shooting range.

Most of the pintails have left — perhaps a dozen or so at the south end of our pond. Took one from the blind on a pass shot.

Plowing up all the pastures for row crops next year has driven away the white-tailed kites — haven't seen a one this season.

DH 3 spig, 1 mallard, 2 g-w teal
G. McPeak 1 spig 2 mallard, 1 widgeon
/ tot. 10 ducks

Sorenson

Jan 15, 1975

Dense tule fog never did raise till afternoon. When we left the blind at noon you still couldn't see 100 yards. Grady and I were in #2 and despite the fog we came out with a mixed bag of 10 ducks. The birds got tired flying above it and some of them worked down through it, giving us snap shots as they loomed up overhead and disappeared in a few seconds. Mostly of course the low flight consisted of shovelers and teal, but bigger ducks showed up occasionally.

We found the mallard "feeding call" very effective in turning birds back toward us. Grady produced this chatter by jiggling a Scotch Duck Call while I tooted on the spig whistle. At noon just as we were gathering up to quit, four mallards loomed out of the fog and as they were disappearing Grady hit the chatter call. Instantly we could see the birds turn, and when we shot they were alighting on the edge of our decoys. We knocked down three of them.

Lots of geese in the country two - mostly honkers. After lunch Grady and I went back and picked up part of the decoys. When we started back toward the clubhouse the fog raised and we found hundreds of honkers gathered on the fallow field north of the McNaughton pond. Grady collected a wing-tipped honker, lost earlier by Glenn.

Glenn's says there are still snipe in the South end.

6 sprigs
1 mallard
2 snipe

Sorenson

Jan 18, 1975

Heavy fog until birds visible ± about 100 yards. In no. 5 I had little action up to 8:30 but after that the birds got tired of flying and began working the stick-ups. With a good N breeze I was getting shooting on the back swing and limited by 10:30

Tremendous numbers of teal, shovelers and widgeon fluttering over the blind all morning. Lots of geese in the air too but they kept out of range.

All blinds had birds working, but the sprigs especially seemed to recognize the blind islands and many flared away. At no. 5 I had fewer flights but the blind is nearly invisible and I had my limit well ahead of anyone else.

Early in the season all sprigs were fat, but now they range from medium to poor in condition. Some taken out of flocks were downright skinny. I think this relates to the plowing up of grain stubbles made possible by the extremely dry autumn. We find corn in a few crops, rice in even fewer. Many crops are empty or contain grass seed (some of it with green sprouts) or unidentifiable dark colored mush. I found chopped up sedge roots in a few beds, cut to length I presume by a disc harrow.

A dozen or so snipe around, of which I took two. Big elk stew for supper.

2 spigs
1 mallard

Sorenson

Jan 15, 1975

The fog continued today, much like yesterday with a bit of N breeze. I sent back to no. 5 but had very little shooting. Shot at four birds and got three — two cock spigs and a greenhead. Everybody ended up with two or three birds apiece when we quit at 10:00 AM to pick up decoys.

The ducks have developed the habit of gathering in enormous flocks in open pastures or fallow fields. They get scalded every time they go near a pond, so they simply avoid water. There was one big aggregation in the fallow field west of our pond and another in the pasture east of the clubhouse.

We worked steadily from 10 AM to 1:00 PM to get all the decoys gathered, racked, and delivered to the boot room. Then after a drink and a bit of lunch we cleaned out the kitchen and locked everything in the two padlocked cupboards. It was 4:30 before we could head for home

This has been a fine season. My total kill was 107 ducks, of which 96 were spigs and 5 mallards. Also a good snipe year — 36 in all. No complaints for 1974!

Luzpld

West Betten Pond

Season- 1974-75
Daily- 7
Possession- 14

Date Guest	Pintail	Mallard	Widgeon	C. Teal	G.W.Teal	Ringneck	Woodduck	Jacksnipe	Pheasant	Other Ducks	Total	Geese
1974												
Oct 23	7								5		7	
Oct 26	6								3		6	
Oct 27	2								-		2	
Oct 30	6								-		6	+6 Kan mallard
Nov 2	5								2		5	
Nov 6	7								2+2=4		7	+7 Gordy McPeak
Nov 10	7							6	1		7	
Nov 16	7							5	3		7	+7 Kan mallard
Nov 23	6							11	3		6	
Nov 24	2		1								3	
Nov 27	7										7	
Nov 30	1							3	6		14	LBL- 1 sprig 1 Gan 3 Snipe
Dec. 7	7								2		7	
Dec 21	7							8			7	LBL 3 sprig 4 Snipe
Dec 28	4	2									6	
1975												
Jan 11	4				3			1			7	
Jan 15	3	1			2						6	+2 mal, 1 sprig 1 widgeon G. Mall
Jan 18	6	1						2			7	
Jan 19	2	1									3	
Totals (1982 only)	96	5	1		5			36	29		107	29 ducks (Geese)

Turlock, Calif.
Sept 26, 1975

Hunted doves with Ed Channing, his father, and Dennis — of CFOG. Initial field was a corn stubble that had a lot of red maids as an understory. The field has been disced to plant oats but there is enough red maids seed in the sandy surface to attract a pretty good group of doves. I took 5 birds there (of 7 shots).

We moved then to a safflower stubble along the Tuolumne River bottoms, also worked my last with plenty of seed showing. Nice group of birds loafing there having finished feeding. We had a list of shooting and I got three more (total 8 birds, 15 shells, 1 cripple lost in the weedy jungle of Tuolumne — total that is for the day).

Ed points out that the grain acreage in the Turlock area has been decreasing steadily for many years, with more irrigation, grapes, almonds and alfalfa). Above population has been dropping accordingly. Points of concentration such as we shot today are few and far apart nowadays. Likewise, brushy and swampy areas are continually being grubbed out and leveled, with near annihilation of quail and reduction of pheasants.

Ed + Dennis have been putting up wood duck boxes along Tuolumne, with some initial success. Saw one wood duck and a few mallards today.

Dr. Tsprigs

Sorenson

Oct 18, 1975

We had the pond in good shape for opening day. Mowing job was just as we had planned it, laid out by Woody and colored tape. Decoys were more or less properly placed, including the stick-ups.

Light SW breeze and sky largely clear, just as I like it. There were several thousand birds on our pond but the total flight in the valley was light.

I sat in #6 and was first out with a limit. Woody had equivalent flight over no. 2, and Ted did well in #4. Only denies in #1 had very poor pickings. I waved him into #6 when I left and he did OK there as later in #2. All together a good opening. I shot 7 birds, 9 shells.

There were considerably more small ducks than I remember on other opening days — teal, widgeon and a few shovelers. An occasional mallard as well. Saw no pickerel or geese.

After lunch I went home & took Betty but the rest of the boys went after pheasants on Valsac. They got a few but found the birds ganged up in standing corn on the old Sacramento pond where they were virtually impregnable.

Saw a number of white-tailed kites along the road and a few roughlegs.

Sorenson
Oct 25, 1975

I was last choice and went into no 5, where the flight was very light. Nevertheless I had three spring when Woody left #6 at 9 AM. Finished my limit easily in 6. (Mink, 8 shells).

The wind is south today and then overcast oozing rain is coming. Still not a very heavy overhead flight of ducks, but our pond (the stick-ups specifically) pulls in more than our share. The boys on the pond to the north did well today — Heady had a limit in an hour.

Jacksnipe have arrived in fair number — I saw perhaps a dozen past #5 and later as we went to the car we jumped a bunch of 7 birds the road.

Field the pheasants with very scant success — 4 birds for six of us in 2 hours. They are all in the corn — scarcely a bird on the ditches. Duncan is trying to get the corn cut, but it started to rain at 4 PM which will delay that operation. We hope the pheasant shooting will improve when corn is taken off.

Not many ducks had come back to the pond by dusk.

Bx - 5 spsp
1 mallard

Sorenson
Oct 26, 1575

A wild rainy morning with driving south wind. Woody was first choice and took #1 which proved to be a cawsey move. The birds were fighting upwind across the N pond, and straight over #1 and he limited in an hour to the delight of all of us. It is good to see that blind begin to pay off.

In #6 I had little shooting until Woody left #1. By 9 am I had six, but was so cold and wet I was glad to quit when Woody drove back for me. I had fallen into the pond (flat on my bottom) first thing in the morning and was not very comfortable. Shot poorly in the wind, as I always do.

Lots more snipe in evidence now — I think a major flight came in with the storm. Saw one canvasback and Woody reports a flock of six. Still no geese. Lots of green-winged teal and more widgeon and sprongs.

We got on dry clothes and enjoyed a leisurely lunch at the house, then drove home. This was not the day for a pheasant hunt.

Doc 7 sprigs
Ken Morrison 6 sprigs
1 shoveler
1 Valley pheasant

Sorenson

Oct 29, 1975

Kenney and I started in #2 and had a couple of birds when Ted finished his limit in #6. Ken moved over and had his limit there by 9 AM. Then I went in and took my last two birds in #6 also. It was hot today with a nice NE breeze that seemed to pull birds to the East side. Ken made one mistake in identity but kept the bird anyway.

Dennis stayed in #4 and finally limited, although it was clear to all of us that #5 would have been a much better shoot — perhaps as good as #6.

We still are not seeing any really heavy flights of ducks — no high sheins of sprigs headed into the wind.

Practically no snipe down yet, nor any curlews to speak of. An occasional bunch of dowitchers

After lunch we tried to hunt pheasants on Volrac but found scarcely a bird on the ditches — they are ganged up in the standing corn on old Sacramento fields. We had a couple of shots but took only one little hen (nice a dandy joint by skiing).

BR 2 Sprig
2 Jackscrape
3 Ringneck pheasants

Sorenson
Nov 1, 1975

Heavy fog for three hours in the morning. I kept a load of #8 in the right barrel and took two snipe at no 5. When I heard coots flushing from a marshhawk I would stand up and wait for a snipe to materialize out of the fog. There were only 6 or 8 on our south end, however, so chances were limited.

When the fog raised we had about an hour or so of good sprig flight, most of it on the main pond. Ted limited in #6 and I nearly did a good deal of shooting in #2.

Went for pheasants after lunch and surrounded the "hot corner" first. Skip made a fine point beside the bridge on the main canal and when I went over there three pheasants came out, one at a time. I got all three. The corner yielded a dozen or more birds (now that the corn is cut) and everyone had some shooting. After this flurry, Glennis and I headed for home.

Still no heavy overhead flight of sprigs. Perhaps it wasn't a good day for that kind of action. Fish + Game talks of large numbers in the Valley but we aren't seeing them.

I have yet to see or hear a goose this year.

BR 7 spigs

Sorensons
Nov 5, 1975

Woody was first choice on he and Ward went into the double, so I took #6. The wind was strong from the SW and the early flight was magnificent, coming from the NE across the road and straight over me. Nearly all were a bit out of range but it was beautiful to watch them side-slip back and forth overhead in good sunlight (there were broken clouds that led to rain before evening). I would take an occasional shot at upwind birds, generally avoiding the downwind passers. After 5 straight (one shot, one duck) I got smart-ass and tried a coch spig downwind, missing him clean both barrels. Went back to the proven formula and took the next two OK. Total - 7 spigs, 9 shells.

I had trouble with the safety on my gun last Saturday so it is in the gunsmith. Shot Dad's old 20x today and it seems to fit me fine. As far as I know this is the first time that gun has been shot since Dad died in 1948. Main springs are still strong enough to fire.

Saw only one little wisp of three snipe. Two nice flocks of canvasbacks buzzed the pond, and all of us just watched them with appreciation. One of Little Joe's guests bulled a redhead.

Dk 6 Spvje
3 Volsa Pheasants

Sorenson
Nov 8, 1975

North breeze, clear sky as I settled in #6 well before shooting time. There were thousands of ducks on our pond, which we disturbed, but after all of us were down in barrels they milled around the pond in great swirling skeins, many birds re-alighting on the pond or coming over us very low. A lovely dawn.

When shooting began they climbed up pretty high and became very cautious about descending so the hunt went slowly. By 9:00 I had 6 Spvje and two cripples down, so I left the blind and spent an hour with Rex crippple hunting, without success. Later Dennis picked up one of them so only one was lost.

Still we see virtually no snipe on our south end, and I am beginning to suspect that our pond is unattractive this year because it was so lightly grazed. Snipe are present in good numbers on other ponds (Little Joe's, The Elks).

Worked the east end, Volsa and did a good job, surrounding the area. Corn is all out now down there. I took 3 along the big E-W canal and the other boys had 7 or 8.

Watched the last quarter of UC-U. Wash. football game on TV before going home. Cal won!

Pk 2 spruce
10 jackscrew

Sorenson's

Nov 12, 1975

Had a big moose stew Tuesday evening in honor of Lee Richardson's visit. He showed some of his fine movies of waterfowl and other wildlife.

Wednesday AM was clear and almost still with a slight north breeze. At #5 I had only three shots (one shell each) from 6 AM to 11:30 and took two each spring. Woody had desultory shooting at #6 and ended with a limit before noon. The other blinds were as quiet as mine. Looks like the November doldrums have started.

Some geese and swans are arriving, however, and a delightful parade of hawks passed over all morning - many rough-legs and a few Cooper, sparrow hawk, kites, red-tails and two prairie falcons. Spent most of the morning hawk watching.

After lunch Woody and I went after snipe on the NW corner of Mound Farm. We took a few on our south end and decided to make a major effort. We ended the day with 21 between us. There were several hundred birds on Mound Farm but they were wild as hell, despite the warm sunshine.

3 sprigs
4 Valsa pheasants

Sorenson

Nov 16, 1975

Reg Barrett and I took the wildlife class to Gray Lodge Refuge for a field trip Saturday, then came on to the duck club for the night and a Sunday shoot. Had a nice steak dinner Sat. evening with Woody and Ted.

Sunday broke more or less clear — some high overcast — but at least no ground fog. I put Reg in #6 as my first choice, and I went to #5. Reg had pretty fair action and had 7 birds down by 9:30. However, he had not kept the Lebrad to pick up, and even with the dog we only found 6 sprigs. I moved into #6 and had a couple of shots, ending up with 3 cock sprigs, one of which I had killed early in #5.

All the other blinds had spotty shooting, ending up with a bird or two apiece.

After lunch we went after pheasants, with very good luck. The corn is mostly cut in the Sacramento area and a good many birds are on the ditches. Between us we took about a dozen birds, of which Reg and I scored 4 (against my Valsar total).

We didn't go after snipe, though we saw quite a few flying about.

Bx 1 Spize
7 Juncos
3 Ring-necked pheasants

Sorenson

Nov 22, 1975

It was clear and still at daylight but within half an hour the fog dropped down on us and there we sat for over three hours. I was in #5 and in view of the absence of ducks I put 8's in the gun and hunted snipe from the blind. Every time a marsh hawk would go by a bunch of snipe would take to the air and now and then one would pass me. I pilled four this way and took three more on the way to the car at 11 AM, ending with a near limit. (Woody and I have learned since our last snipe hunt Nov 12 that the daily limit is 8, and not 10 as we thought!)

Bob Lewis shot in #6 as Woody's guest, and he had half a dozen good chances but couldn't hit them. Ted however came in with a limit from #1 — 6 Snipe and a Widgeon. That "Cinderella" blind is beginning to show considerable promise, especially on a north wind as we had today

We are beginning to see ducks, a few geese and an occasional flock of crows, all high overhead however. The geese are all specs and crows — no Canadas yet.

Craig Wiley Ranch, 6 mi W Greenfield
Nov. 27 and 28, 1975

Betty and I accompanied Woody and Phyllis to Greenfield for a Thanksgiving quail hunt on the Craig Wiley ranch. We stayed in the Padre Motel, had dinner the first night at an excellent Mexican restaurant, and on Thanksgiving we ate our turkey at Keelers in King City. All very pleasant and fun.

The Wiley ranch (about 2000 A I think) lies due west of Greenfield six miles on both sides of Arroyo Seco. Some bottomlands are in grapes and truck, but most of the property is cattle grazing. The hills go up 2000 ft or more, but we hunted in California sage in draws adjoining Arroyo Seco - both sides. The river is permanent, in fact has a steelhead run in winter and resident trout in the headwaters in Los Padres National Forest.

The habitat for quail is absolutely ideal and I have never seen a higher population in unmanaged terrain. All of our hunting in two days was in an area considerably under a square mile, and we found separate coveys of 25, 50, 100, 50, 75 and 75 totaling 375 birds. Another covey of 100 was said to live on the west edge of our hunting area but we failed to locate them. This approaches a bird per acre.

Of all these six coveys we only succeeded in scattering one - the first covey we hunted in

Nov 27-28, 1975 (cont.)
a draw across from (N) the ranch. After three flushes we really broke their group of 50 and they scattered nicely in two rose draws, giving us lots of shooting. All the others tended to stick together and run after a flush. Still we had all the action we wanted.

Scores for the two days:

Date	Ad ♂	Ad ♀	Im ♂	Im ♀	Total
Nov 27	4	5	7	4	20
Nov 28	2	5	4	6	17
	6	10	11	10	37

The Wiley pastures are grazed heavily in the low reaches near water, but very moderately higher on the hills. Ground cover is excellent for feeding with a good duff layer under the grass and dead forbs. Crops were filled with a mixture of seeds mostly legumes (lotus?) and no greens, since there hasn't been enough rain yet to induce much growth. The whole hunt was tremendously satisfactory and we hope to go back.

Deer are abundant on the ranch, and Craig and his friends kill a lot of bucks here (17 last season). We saw 50 mallards fly down Arroyo Seco one morning. Also saw half a dozen Coopers hawks, several red-tails lots of kestrels, one road runner, and dozens of Audubon cottontails.

BR 6 sprigs
8 snipe

Sorenson
Dec 6, 1975

Fog dropped down about 7 AM and lifted finally at 11:00. Good number of sprigs working from then till noon but Woody in no. 1 saved as a kind of niche base and didn't let much traffic through. Still I got a few shots and took 6 birds with 8 shells in #6.

After lunch we all came back to the pond to rearrange the decoys at #2 in the vain hope that we might spread the shooting a bit. We took the big mass of decoys out from behind the blind and put them in a long N-S string passing in front of the blind. Also moved a number of stick-ups a bit further west.

Mainly we gave the pintails a good try. I got a limit of 8, Woody had 6, Dennis 6 and Ted 3. I would judge there were 50 or more snipe in the south end at along the W edge of Little Joe's. When we finally mobilized back at the cars it was nearly 4 PM and too late to go for pheasants.

Big increase in shovelers but still not very many teal or widgeon in the area, nor geese either. We have seen very few of the big canlers this season

ASE 6 snipe
2 Valsse pheasants

Sorenson

Dec 7, 1975

Today the fog was lying in tight at daylight and it was still there at noon. I sat in the till about 9:00 and decided to go for jacksnipe in the fog. It was interesting shooting — often I would jump birds at 20 yds or less and couldn't even see them against the brown sedge background. Finally I turned Rex loose to hunt ahead and chase the birds into the air where I might get pass shots. This strategy worked pretty well and I ended up with six birds.

After lunch Ted & Dennis left and Woody and I went out for a pass at the pheasants. While we were parked at the trailer dropping off the record box a mob of birds cut across in front of us toward the South ditch. Woody left me at the trailer and drove like hell to the far end of the ditch, cutting off the retreat. When we closed in, we had about 40+ birds between us, all (or nearly all) wild pheasants. We took two roosters apiece and quit, considering the hunt eminently successful.

Another big flight of rough-legged hawks and a scattering of other raptors (kestrels, marsh hawks, red-tails). Still not many geese in evidence.

Dec 1 Sprig
15-W teal

Sorrows

Dec 13, 1975

Clear and brisk SW breeze, shifting during the morning to W and finally to N. To all appearances it should have been a helluva duck day but the flight was curiously light. Such birds as passed overhead showed little interest in our pond. Woody had 6 sprigs in #6 by 8:30 but didn't get another one, though he stayed till after 11:00. In #2 I did not get a shot until 10:15 and ended up with two chances to shoot — once at sprig, once at teal. We have not improved #2 any with our shift of the decoys. Jed got a couple of birds in #4 and Dennis had a list of long shooting in #5 but did not score.

Big difference today was a substantial flight of geese, nearly all honkers. They kept well up (100 to 200 yds) but added greatly to the scenery.

The jacksnipe are suddenly gone — we only jumped two in the S end of our pond and Dennis walked the W edge of Little Joe's without putting out any. It has neither rained nor frozen, but something signalled their departure.

After lunch Dennis and I left for home — Dennis had some pressing Santa Claus duties. The rest of the Volsoc gang went for pheasants but I don't know how they made out.

1 S-a teal
4 jacksnipe
3 Valsac pheasants

Sorenson

Dec 17, 1975

Clear and cold this morning, with ice on the fringes of the pond. I went to #5 and sat through a couple of hours of cold fog with little action. Had one shot at a cock spring flying with a dozen spoonbills and reached him with both barrels. He towered and came gracefully down, butt first, to within 30 ft of me, whereupon he caught his wings and sailed away in the fog never to be seen again (Ray and I spent 30 minutes looking for him later in the morning). I was so fascinated watching him descend like a fluttering parachute that I did not reload!

Had one more shot later at a little band of S-a teal and took one on a good fast overhead shot.

Fog lifted at 8 AM (very much) but no ducks came. Total bag in 5 blinds with 5 guns was two teal and a spring. Later Woody jumped a drake mallard in the sand and he completed the duck kill.

So we went after snipe and killed about a dozen between us.

After lunch Woody, Ted, Fred Brawley (Ted's guest) and I went for Valsac pheasants and bagged 8 between us in hot corner and north end ditches. Mostly wild birds.

Hunters are starting to use the disced up corn stubbles South of our pond. Also saw some swans and geese (two or three hundred each) passing overhead. But very few ducks — mostly spoonies.

1 cock spring
9 jacksnipe
4 Oahac pheasants

Sorenson
Dec 20, 1975

The Thanksgiving lull in duck shooting continues. I sat in #4 until 10 AM and had two shots at sprigs, both long. Killed one bird and missed the other. Woody in #2 did not shoot at a duck, Ted in #1 killed two and Dennis' guest Larry killed nothing in #6, nor did Dennis in #5. Big deal!

So we took it out on the jacksnipe. There were probably 50 or more in the S end of our pond and we killed about half of them — 3 for me, 10 for Woody, and 6 for Dennis and Larry. It was sunny and warm in the late morning and the snipe held very well. Toward the end of the snipe hunt the boys flushed a teal out of the tules between #4 and #5, and as it passed me maybe 100 yds away I could swear it was a blue-winged teal male, complete with white crescents on its face. Wish we could have collected it.

Geese are in the country in good numbers. Hunters are using the corn stubble south of our pond and south of Little Joe's.

After lunch we went for pheasants and killed about 15 between us. I knocked down one bird in the main canal N of Hot Corner and Woody retrieved it but encountered a willow branch when he returned to shore. The branch was under his chin and he just kept trying to swim, but of course got nowhere. I had to wade in to rescue him — wet to the crotch!

1 g.w teal
1 pachsnipe

Sorenson
Dec 24, 1975

This was more of a social weekend than duck hunting. Friday night Dennis put on a chili-bean spread at House of Sorenson, preceded by an African wildlife slide show by Woody, Harold Healy and myself. Saturday night I went to steak dinner at House of Lords, invited by Stern Chickering. All of this was a substitute for shooting ducks.

Sunday AM fogged up at daylight but cleared about 8 AM. There was a heavy overhead flight of spring headed southwest but very few birds dropped down to look over our pond, and practically none of them came in. Larry had two shots at spring/widgeon in #6, the rest of us watched or peeked away at the teal. The other ponds on the ranch fared about the same.

Dec 24, 1975 1 Spring

Worst hunt of the year for me. I was #1 choice and went into #6 only to have a dense and persistent blanket of fog descend on the marsh for the whole morning. When at last it lifted just before noon there wasn't a duck in the air. I had one shot early and took a hen spring who was flying with a cock widgeon. One shell, one duck. Big deal!

We have noticed a remarkable reduction in the number of curlews flying over our pond since Duncan plowed up all the surrounding pastures for agricultural crops. Heard lots of geese passing overhead above the fog.

Sorensons
Dec 31, 1975

A family, pheasant-huntin' picnic. Lura, Barb and Carey joined Billy, Kay and me at the Club about 10 AM and we geared up for a master pheasant chase. Since we had only one doz (Deiz) we could only mount three guns namely Barb, Carey and Lura. Hot corner yielded nothing. The middle ditch (Woody's terminology) was loaded and there were a good many shells burned but no bloodshed. Went thence to the double ditch paralleling the canal (W of the middle ditch) and again there were a dozen or more birds. Lura got one, so we retired for lunch in the lee pocket of a ditch. There is a strong north wind blowing, clear and sunny.

After a sumptious lunch we drove to the SE corner of Valsse opposite the commercial duck spread where we jumped another 10+ birds. Lura & Barb took the lateral (#4) ditch and chased out a few birds of which Lura got a nice wild cock. That concluded the bloodshed.

This was not a prescribed shooting day on Sorenson Farms and the sprigs were racked up on the N edge of nearly all ponds, including ours. Must have been several thousand behind #2 and #4 blinds and a fair scattering over the whole pond. This clearly was a day we should have been hunting ducks.

Fair numbers of geese in the air and some sprigs were moving all day - upwind toward the north. A dozen or so long billed curlews in the pasture W of our trailer.

2 snipe
8 jacksnipe

Sorenson

Jan 3, 1976

The north wind which blew for two days earlier in the week quit today and it was calm, cold (ice over most of the pond) and cloudy. Bleeks worked the pond very casually and the only ones that really came in were spoonies and teal. I was in #6 (first choice) and held off for snipe but only two singles came within range and I got them both. I guess I should have gone for teal and widgeon from the beginning. Both of my snipe were long shots, wing-tipped, diving cripples. Little Reg couldn't catch either one and I had to go out and run them down — pulled both out under water, one swimming like hell, the other clamped in the grass with head under water.

At 11:15 we went snipe hunting and it was fantastic. There must have been 150 birds in the SE end of our pond, and Woody Dennis and I limited (24 birds) in less than an hour, without leaving the area below #5. I got 7 of my 8 on overhead pass shots. For some reason, they wouldn't leave that area but kept circling around and returning. This is a very dry season all pastures and cultivated fields are dry and the snipe are forced into the shallow fringes of the duck ponds. Counting today I have taken 55 snipe — a record year.

As we left the pond, hunters began pouring into a winter grain field west of our #4 blind. Three bunches of 20-30 each came in one after another. Good place for a goose pit.

After lunch a gang went after pheasants but I came home.

3 cock spring
2 Value pheasants

Sorenson
Jan 10, 1576

Yesterday there was a pretty fair rain (first in weeks) but it cleared up overnight and today we were back on the fog kick. Lay heavy on the land until about 10:15 when it lifted and finally broke up before noon.

Surprisingly, a good number of ducks worked down through the fog and all of us got a bit of shooting during the long hours between 6:51 and 10:15. In fact, I had my three spring between 8 and 9 AM. Two little bunches I whistled in and turned in the fog, taking a cock out of each. I was in #2 double and noticed that as soon as visibility improved I did not get another reasonable shot — the spring definitely shied off the blind island. We have to do something next year to conceal the island better — lower its profile.

In the other blinds everyone got limits — all or nearly all spring. We all had many chances at spoonies, widgeon and teal, but stayed with the spring standard.

Lots of geese in the air today, including hunters using the fields S and W of our pond. Also a noticeable increase in the number of swans. A flock of a dozen white pelicans smacked in on me from behind and scared me to death. Fair number of snipe still in our S end but nothing like last week.

Hunted pheasants all afternoon and took 11 birds between us. Not so many left now.

Numerous coots dead of cholera but not many ducks yet, thank goodness. It is bad in other parts of the Valley.

4 cock sprigs
2 g.w. teal
2 jacksnipe

Sorenson

Jan 17, 1976

Last of the season and the morning arrived (more or less) in a pea-soup fog. There were literally thousands of ducks on our pond, and quite a few geese, when I slipped out to #5 blind from the road. At 7:00 Bob Dennis shot in #4 and a cloud of birds came over, of which I got one cock sprig. Soon all the big birds were above the fog and from then until 11:45 only teal and spoonies were zipping around where we could see them. Finally just before noon the fog began to break and down through the hole poured a magnificent parade of sprigs and a bunch of hookers. Mostly they worked over the slickups and the pond and settled there until someone shot whereupon they would leave but immediately others would come. It was a grand show.

At one point in the fog a snipe alighted about 25 ft. from the blind and I watched him feed for five minutes. Then he fluffed his feathers into a round ball and began saying "Jaich-jaich-jaich ..." over and over again for nearly a minute. His bill did not open when he made his little call, but his throat vibrated. Then he went back to feeding. Incidentally last week we heard several snipe winnowing while we were hunting them in mid-day — sunny and warm.

After lunch we picked up most of the decoys and I cleaned out my belongings in the room. Woody and Dennis are staying over for the last gasp shoot on Sunday.

West Betten Pond 1975-76

Season-
Daily- 7
Possession- 14

1975 Date Guest	Pintail	Mallard	Widgeon	C. Teal	G.W.Teal	Ringneck	Woodduck	Jacksnipe	Pheasant	Other Ducks	Total	Geese
Oct 18	7										7	
Oct 25	7								1		7	
Oct 26	5	1									6	
Oct 29	7								1		7	Morrish 6 spiz, 1 gm
Nov 1	2							2	3		2	
Nov 5	7										7	
Nov 8	6								3		6	
Nov 12	2							10			2	
Nov 16	3								4		3	Barrett 6 spiz
Nov 22	2							7	3		2	
Dec 6	6							8			6	
Dec 7								6	2		-	
Dec 13	1				1						2	
Dec 17					1			4	3		1	
Dec 20	1							9	4		1	
Dec 21					1			1			1	
Dec 24	1										1	
Jan 3	2							8			2	
Jan 10	3								2		3	
Jan 17	4				2			2			6	
	66	1			5			57	26		72	

Sorensons — BR - 7 Spigs

Oct 23, 1976

Opening day and we have the pond in pretty good shape. This year we cut the cover around the barrels much lower than last year, to lower the profile of the blind islands. Also we added another 100 spiz stick-up decoys, all down in the south end by blinds #5 and 4 to try and pull more birds down that way. Perhaps most importantly we added a second barrel at #6 so that we can take guests there.

Woody and Ward went into 6, and as second choice I took 2. Clear weather and a brisk SW breeze and the heavy flight worked over 2 in a way that never happened last year. I limited in about half an hour. Dennis moved up from 5 and took a limit, yielding the blind to Ed who soon limited his limit. When all the rest of us had left the pond Ward moved over from 6 and completed his limit in 2. Woody had his limit in 6. It was mighty gratifying to see #2 come back into its own after such a poor showing in recent years. We were a little disappointed that the south end blinds didn't show better.

BR - 4 spring
EWS - 2 spring

Sorensons

Dec 24, 1976

I went home last night for Betty and we came up this morning in time for breakfast. I was first choice and would have preferred #2 but took #6 because it was easier to get Betty out there.

Breeze was SW, and like yesterday this pulled the major flight over #2 where Red and Ed O'Connor had no trouble taking 14 springs. Betty and I settled for 6 birds but might have had more if we had shot better. Same old problem shooting double - I have trouble with my timing. But we had a good time.

It is clear that Bing is losing his eyesight so I took him on Monday to Dr. Larson in Richmond who is an eye specialist for dogs. He told me the sad news that Bing has retinal atrophy in both eyes and will soon be completely blind. He is night blind now but still can see a bit during daylight. Mostly his retrieving of duck is done by sound and smell. He waits after a shot until he hears a "splat" then heads that way, quartering a little down wind until he gets the scent. This is OK for dead birds but he had a lot of trouble catching diving cripples.

Poor old Bing, he is a lovely dog and only between 7 and 8 years old.

BR 7 Spring

Sorenson

Oct 27, 1976

As last choice I went to #5 but had a dandy shoot there. In a light N wind a good many birds worked south on the back-swing of the pick-up spread. Also I think the 100 new pick-ups, most of them just W of #5, seem to help. Also I shot well — 7 spring with 8 shells. I took the first 5 straight and had dreams of a perfect day, but I only slobbered the sixth bird and had to shoot him again.

After lunch we had a little pheasant hunt on Valsac and I took a pair in the "hot corner".

BR - 3 spring, 1 mal.
Ken M - 1 spring
4 Valsac pheasants

Oct 30, 1976

Took Ken Morrish to #6 and to my surprise and disgust we hit heavy fog, right after daylight. It lasted 2½ hours. We had a bit of shooting after it broke and took 4 spring and a mallard between us. Breeze was SE which seemed to favor #6 blind, where Dennis and Jason had a good shoot.

Had a good pheasant hunt after lunch and Ken and I got 2 birds apiece in hot corner and along one of the E-W ditches N of the old Sacramento pond. Fair crop of wild birds apparently.

Saw 7 kestrels between Sorenson and Vacaville.

BR - 5 sprigs
G. McPeak - 7 sprigs
4 valsa pheasants

Sorenson

Nov 3, 1976

Woody McPeak and I went into #6 and had a fine flight. We got with 11 birds in the blind and two cripples down, of which we recovered one. The second fell in a plowed field and had been eaten by a marsh hawk when I found him. From now on I am joining Woody in shooting to a personal limit of 5 instead of the legal 7. Both of us feel that we have killed more ducks than we can really use in recent years.

Had a nice pheasant hunt in the afternoon.

Nov 10, 1976

BR - 5 sprigs
1 valsa pheasant

I shot in #2 alone, and took 5 birds with 6 shells. Good flight on a SW breeze. Again I am struck with how much better I shoot when I am not waiting for someone else to time the shot.

We had a very brief pheasant hunt — surrounded the hot corner where there were about a dozen birds — mostly wild cocks. I took one on a nice pass shot.

Still no jacksnipe on our pond — the flight is very late this year. We understand there have been no hard frosts in the north. 8 hunters.

Bk - 2 spigs
(Blind #2)

Sorensons

Nov 13, 1976

As we went out this morning a heavy thick fog settled over the valley and we sat in the blinds looking at an opaque sky from 6 to 10:30. As the years go on my patience seems to be getting shorter! When it finally lifted (it didn't break but just rose to 200 yds) the birds poured through, but they were extremely cautious and goosey about coming down to the pond. I took two spigs but had to leave at 11:30 to go to lunch at the House of Lords. Ted stayed on in #6 and had a pretty good shoot the last half hour.

This was Ladies Day at the House of Commons. Five of our wives came up for a big turkey dinner cooked by Woody, Dennis and Harold Heady. It was very festive, with candles on the table and good white wine brought by Ted. Four of the gals stayed overnight — we bunked them down in sleeping bags on beds of Duncan and Jim Bancroft.

This morning as the fog lifted I saw numerous jacksnipe in flocks of 6 & 10, apparently arriving from the north. They all flew straight past us, ~~and~~ headed south. None stopped on our pond but I hope we will get our quota soon.

BH - 1 mallard

Swanson

Nov 14, 1976

It rained hard all night and was still raining intermittently when we went out to the duck blinds. I took Betty to #5 and we huddled there till 10:30, pretty wet and cold. Only one bird came near our blind - a hen mallard that surprised us very low. I reached her before she got away. Her legs and bill were gobbed with mud and her crop was full of corn - had been gleaning in a corn field.

There was an enormous flight of spring and fruitful a few mallards, flying south just beneath the low clouds. Some flocks would disappear behind gaps of cloud. None of these birds showed the slightest interest in our pond and we concluded that they were migrating. Likewise, a number of snipe came by, also south bound, in small flocks. Only one little bunch circled our pond but they didn't stop. This seemed to be a continuation of the migration noted yesterday.

Quite a variety of shorebirds showed up too — yellowlegs, black-bellied plovers, curlews, dowitchers, killdeers, stilts and peeps. A lot of these came down near #5 blind.

Several flocks of swans and snow geese came over high. Still very few teal, widgeon or spoonies.

Bk - 6 spring

Sorenson

Nov 20, 1976

A heavy overcast and threatened fog never did drop & the ground but hung about 200 yds. high. As a result we had a dandy spring shoot when we least expected it. I shot alone in #2 and had my self-imposed limit of 5 by about 9:00 AM. All blinds were getting shooting, and I did not feel compelled to give up my place to someone else, so I stayed on for another hour enjoying the show. The flight continued all morning with big bunches working around the stick-ups, but they were extremely cautious (as is always the case in haze and poor visibility) so not many came down to shooting level. Woody and Jerry Russell finaly limited in #6 and Ted did also in #5. A light NE breeze helped the flight at the south end of the pond. No one was in #4 but that would have offered a good shoot too.

Several flocks of swans and of specs went over and a few wisps of snipe, flying high. Still we have no numbers of snipe on our pond — I jumped a few going in by #4 and none going out past #5. What is wrong? Have we no invertebrates in the mud this year? Water levels look good, there is plenty of mud, but the birds just are not there.

I left after lunch to drive Betty to Burbank for a dove shoot tomorrow. 19 hunters

BH
Betty
Ed Channing } 33 doves

Turlock

Nov 21, 1976

At daylight Ed took us to a small patch of wheat stubble along the lower Merced River where last year we had a nice shoot. A few days ago the rancher told Ed there were plenty of birds but today not a single dove was visible. ~~Shoot~~. So we drove back to the outskirts of Turlock where Ed had seen doves frequenting a 30 acre corn stubble. A phone call cleared our way for a hunt. As we walked out in the field several hundred doves left and I thought that would be the end of it. But we scattered out and took up stands, and the birds started coming back. A fine flight ensued, lasting all morning. When we quit at 11:30 there were still doves coming in.

Betty shot like a real champ, killing 7 birds on her own, including some very high fast flyers. She shot sitting from her little camp stool that I bought her last year. As we approached the limit Ed made the circuit counting birds but missed three that Betty had in the zipper bag under her stool. The result was that we overshot the limit by 3, which I discovered in the stool as I was putting it away for the year back home! Thank goodness I found them!

Most crops were full of whole kernels of corn. One had melon seeds (like canteloupe) and one a mixture of small seeds — red maids plus other. I judged about half the birds to be young of the year, but they were rough.

ASR 3 snipe
4 jacksnipe

Sorensons
Nov 24, 1976

Fog hung at about 100 yards or so — high enough that a few small bunches worked below it. At noon it was still hanging there. As a result the flight was slow and there were long waits between bunches.

In #5, I was out of the flight pattern, since the little breeze that blew intermittently was SE. During the few gusts that came from NE birds worked over me toward the stick-ups but generally too high. I had shots at two singles, a pair, and a little bunch that flushed when Dennis shot in #6. Got three snipe but should have had at least one more. Shot 6 shells.

Snipe flew about all morning — especially when a marsh hawk passed over. I shot at some and got one from the blind, three more jump shooting when we quit at noon. Our south end is not attractive this year — too much grass and sedge, not enough mud. The 30 or 40 birds in the area were using mostly from #5 to the stick-ups. When we chased them around at noon they went over to Little Joe's.

Jason had two shots at white-fronts in #4 — a single that came in to land and a flock of 30 that maple-leafed in from the west, also set to land. In both cases Jason raised up <u>too early</u> and flared them away at 50 yds. Several big bunches of swans came groping through the fog, looking for a place to rest. 20 kestrels

BR. 5 Spig, 1 mallard
8 Snipe

Luna 2 Spig, 9 Snipe
2 Valley Pheasants

Sorenson

Nov 27, 1976

Magnificent daylight flight of ducks in a roaring north wind (40 mph ±). Big sheins of birds would buck back and forth across the valley, often very low, trying to make headway into the wind. Luna and I were so mesmerized by the spectacle that we didn't shoot much early. The flight let up rather abruptly at about 8 to 9 AM. By that time most everyone in the country had a limit except us. We quit at 11 AM with 8 big birds — plenty.

The wind continued all day but at decreasing velocity. We had a short snappy pheasant drive at hot corner, then Luna and I went snipe hunting on N end of Round Barn property. Surprisingly, the snipe were easy to hit by virtue of turning directly into the wind which slowed them perceptibly. We limited handily.

For the first time this year we had a heavy flight of teal and shovelers — some big bunches of each. Also quite a few geese (Specs, Snow) and swans in the air. Very few widgeon though and no honkers yet. One bunch of 3 Sandhill Cranes.

Ducks were almost all full of yellow corn. One bird had a crop of rice.

DSL 4 Spruce
Luna 2 Spruce
4 Snipe

Sorenson's
Nov 28, 1976

Wind of yesterday had died down by evening and this morning it was very calm, with a light duck flight. Luna and I held down #2 double and we picked off the occasional Spruce, mostly singles that strayed by. No real flight and no flocks working the stick-up decoys.

When we quit mid-morning Luna went to the South end and joined Glenn in a Snipe hunt while I took poor old Bing up to the N levee to look for a wing-tipped cripple we lost there early. Bing is almost blind now - rapidly developing case of retinal atrophy, a congenital situation that is uncurable according to Dr. Larson, a dog eye specealist in Richmond. But he can still use his nose and he picked up the duck for me. Shame to have eye failure in a good dog that is otherwise in the prime of life.

Luna was having trouble seeing ducks and judging distances. He went to our eye doctor Monday morning where it was found he had a detached retina, split down the middle! Dr. Sorenson tacked it down with Laser beam shots. No wonder the Spruce looked fuzzy!

17 Kestrels.

7 quail

Craig Tilley ranch, Greenfield
Dec 1 & 2, 1976

Woody and I drove down Tues. evening, Nov. 30, and hunted all Wed. and Thurs. morning. As we expected, the area where last year we found big coveys had only little flocks of surviving adults this year. All 7 birds killed in the two days were adults (4♀, 3♂), and Craig said he didn't see any broods this year at all.

I am impressed again with how differently little bands of adults act when hunted. Like wild turkeys, they never seem to stop running. During the two days we encountered 7 coveys — all 15 to 25 birds in size — and only one scattered and stuck temporarily. We got three shots at scatters. All other shooting was covey rise. Pretty hard to hunt a population that acts this way.

Drought of last year is continuing right up to now. Green grass on N slopes but S slopes are bare. Filaree is minute & stunted.

We saw two bobcats, several dozen deer including a number of forked-horns, pig tracks in various places — though we saw no pigs. Coyote tracks on high ridges. County predator agent has M-44 guns on those ridges so we couldn't run our dogs.

Home Wednesday after a picnic lunch.

Bk 2 teal
8 snipe
5 Yahoo pheasants

Sorenson

Dec 4, 1976

Calm uninteresting morning with relatively little duck flight. In #5 I had three shots at teal, failed twice trying for doubles. No big ducks came near the place. All other blinds had a bit of shooting but nothing spectacular.

After lunch we had a good pheasant hunt, first in hot corner and secondly in corn and canal-side cover to far east of Yahoo property (near timber slough). We got a dozen or so birds of which I charged 5 — two that Harold Healy got and three of my own.

Then we went snipe hunting at Mound Farms north end. Water was being pumped into the property and many areas that were good a week ago were too deep for snipe today. Still we all had a bit of shooting.

Dec 5, 1976 Bk - 2 snipe

Good NE wind early, dying down by 8 AM. Lovely dawn flight but not many birds working in after sunrise. Big skeins of geese (specs mostly) flying northward high to the E of us. Big numbers lit on our pond.

I hunted this week end without skiing — missed his company!

25 hunters

2 sprigs
8 snipe

Sorenson

Dec 11, 1976

Heavy fog at ground level, though we could see the moon overhead all morning. Didn't begin to burn off until 9 AM by which time the morning flight had largely subsided. I quit the blind (#6) at 10:30 but Ted stayed on in #2 almost till noon and killed an extra bird or two. During the last hour of fog we could hear heavy shooting to the north → I guess they cleared first and drew in all the tired flyers.

Pretty fair bunch of snipe in our south end. We chased them around for half an hour and killed a bird or two apiece. After lunch most of our gang went on a pheasant hunt, but I went after snipe alone in the north end of Mound Farms and finished my limit in half an hour. Saw two prairie falcons — one over the Mound Farms duck ponds, other along the road toward Alvion when I left mid afternoon.

Cleaned all my birds and then went up to the old Cattail Club where Woody and I shot so many years. Al Bell, one of the present owners of Cobe Boswell's old ranch, invited me back to see the property. A lady from Wheatland named Alice served us a lovely steak dinner.

20 mallards drawing in Dec. 10, Vacaville & Sorenson.

1 mallard

Del Cottail Club

Dec 12, 1976

After a cup of coffee, Al Bell and a young guide named Grady took me to one of their levee blinds in the south end of the ranch — now all rice stubble flooded for duck shooting. This blind (no. 6) was a triple of Smitty barrels on a nice check with 50 or so decoys on either side. Elegant looking spread. Yesterday they had a helluva shoot on the property, everybody limiting apparently before 8:30. But today the flight was zilch. In our blind we had only one shot at a grain of mallards and killed the greenhead.

Nevertheless, I had a lovely time and thoroughly enjoyed seeing what had been done with the property. Virtually all of the former pasture has been levelled and terraced for rice growing, and there are now five elegant buildings where formerly only one single little shack stood. In addition to Al Bell the membership includes Bing Crosby and six other shooting members, with their families.

At 8:30 after a non-shoot we went back to the clubhouse and showered, shaved, and dressed for an elegant breakfast served by Alice. Then went home.

6 cock sprigs
8 jacksnipe

Sorensons
Dec 15, 1976

A patch of fog covered our pond at shooting time, though ponds to the north were clear. After listening to the bombardment for nearly an hour we cleared up and birds began to work right away. In #4 I got 6 cock sprigs by 9:30 and left to sit on the south levee and pluck birds while watching the flight and the shooting. Woody came out soon after with 5 sprigs (#2) and Ted with 5 sprigs, all but one taken in #1. Dennis and Jason stayed on till noon and got about 8 or 9 birds, including one spoonie! (Jason) in #6.

While plucking birds at the south end I picked up three snipe on poor shots.

After lunch we returned for snipe, and four of us limited in Little Joe's pond and ours. Still lots of birds concentrated about the duck ponds in the absence of rain and wet pastures. Biggest concentration was in muddy corn stubble at S end of Little Joe's pond.

No geese or swans flying today, but there was a good overhead flight of sprigs, mostly south bound. Breeze was light out of southeast.

Our kestrel count from Sorensons to Vacaville continues to mount — 27 counted coming in Tues. after lunch and 19 outbound on Wednesday.

Big venison stew Tuesday night — damn good too!

with Reg Barrett { 6 snipe
2 Valsoc pheasants
16 snipe

Sorensons

Dec 18-19, 1976

Clear morning, light N breeze, lots of ducks overhead but not many working in to the pond. Nevertheless, action continued right up to noon and every blind had some shooting. In #6 Reg Barrett and I got six nice fat snipe and should have had another bird or two. On the way out of the pond at noon we crowded the snipe a bit and took 7 between us.

After a fine lunch of beans and ham hocks (Harold Heady Special) we hunted pheasants for an hour or so in the corn/timber area at the east end of Valsoc. Took about 7 or 8 birds between us. Wally Hoar was shooting as Norrie Cox's guest and killed his first pheasants - two of them. He was very happy.

Then Reg and I went snipe hunting in the north end of Round Farm. Found the birds clustered in quite a different area from Wednesday, but we scattered them out and shot till we had 9, which finished our limit for the day.

Lots of teal and shovelers in the duck flight but practically no widgeon. Where are they? At this time of year the air used to be full of them.

Dec 19

I put Reg in #2 and I went to #5 but there was no flight at all so we quit early and came home for lunch.

22 kestrels

4 coch spring
6 jacksnipe

Seclusion

Dec 28, 1976

Weather calm, clear and cold. I broke ice in the S end of the pond, and Dennis in #4, was frozen in solid by 8 AM. The main pond stayed open, however, and Ted (in #6) and I got occasional shots throughout the morning. Woody picked off a few back-swing goose shots in #5.

My shooting was mostly long range and I did not distinguish myself — 4 spring with 8 shells. Birds are in reasonably good condition but a far cry from the butter-balls of October. There were plenty of birds working over our pond but most of them stayed high and took offense at the least provocation (like sudden recognition of a blind). Occasionally a bird or two would spin off a flock and come in where we could reach it.

One striking change this year is the complete lack of courtship flights in spring or widgeon — and for that matter the general shortage of widgeon. The continuous dry weather may have something to do with this, though I don't really see the connection. Also there are damn few geese in this part of the valley — even passing overhead. Today I saw one flock of honkers and a pair of specs. Teal and shoveler are abundant, mallards virtually non-existent.

Snipe hunting continues to be excellent. We took near limits in our pond, the boys pond, and Ned's Echo. 28 hen mallards.

Merced Farms

Jan 1, 1977

Morrie Cox invited me to shoot on their properties and he put me in blind #80 while he went to #81. A fog that was there at daylight settled down heavy as the sun flooded the valley and it didn't raise until 10:30, by which time there was no duck flight left. The birds obviously had found open water somewhere to settle.

I had one shot at a single cock spring that circled my decoys nicely. Morrie never did fire his gun. So our total shoot on the 80 pond was one shot, one spring. Over at blind #3, Sally Mohr's boy and a guest shot 9 ducks, of assorted species (widgeon, sprone, teal and spring), most of them before the fog came in.

Again I am impressed with the absence of widgeon. Ten years ago the Sorenson area would be flooded with widgeon by Christmas. Presumably the removal of clover pastures and increase of tilled ground has something to do with the decrease in widgeon, and also geese. Spring, sprones, and g-w. teal are the only abundant ducks in winter nowadays.

I watched several "peeps" feeding around the blind. They do not probe like many other shorebirds but rather just pick tiny items off the surface of the mud and from vegetation (insects I suppose, but maybe some seeds?).

Came home after lunch & take Sally to the airport. 22 kestrels.

18 geese

Swenson

Jan 5, 1976

There was a nice N breeze Tuesday according to Ted but Wednesday morning broke dead calm and cloudy, warm to the point of threatening rain. Judging from the roar of wings at daylight there were a helluva lot of ducks sitting on the property, but they went up and very few came back down. On #6 I had two shots at single specs — killed the first, missed the second. Woody also had two shots in #2 and got a bird each time. Ted and Dennis were shunted in 4 and 5 respectively. And yet we saw more ducks today than any day this year I believe.

Also there were a lot of geese and swans in the air — honkers the dominant goose. None were low however.

A few canvasbacks are still working their way down the valley — a single (almost low enough to try a shot) and a bunch of 10 came over high. Saw more widgeon today than I have so far this season. But the big flight was spoonies — roodles of them. The teal flight is moderate but the spoonies are magnificent, swooping down from high flight and knocking your hat off with the blast of their beating. Great little birds.

18 kestrels

4 cock sprigs
1 Valsac pheasant

Emerson
Jan 8, 1977

There was fog forming when Woody and I arrived last night but a nice N breeze scattered it by daylight and we had a surprisingly good shoot. On first choice I took #6, but #2 turned out to be the good blind. Ted limited there, followed by Woody who limited, and then by Dennis who came out with 4 sprigs at noon. But I was perfectly content with 4 big cock sprigs when I left at 11:00 AM. Dennis said I could have had more shooting had I stayed.

Lots of hombres in the air and they were landing at various points on the ranch. Dear Truman killed one on the pond just north of us. A few flocks of swoosh and speed went over high. The shoveler is the dominant ducks now — they seem to outnumber sprigs and everything else. Lots of sprig counting parties in the air over Gilmore pond where the birds piled in late in the morning. Very few snipe left around our S end — the rains scattered them all over the valley I guess.

After lunch we had a bit of a pheasant hunt on Valsac. Found only three birds in the timber around the old woodduck pond and I got one of them — a nice cock — on a long pass shot.

Only 17 hen mallards today — Woody and I counting together. Have they really thinned out or is this sampling error?

Bob 4 sprigs

Hal S. 3 sprigs
Sakowski 3 pheasants

Sorenson

Jan 15, 1977

High fog stayed high all morning. Light flight over our pond until 9:30, but from then till noon birds were working over the stock-up continuously. Best flights was at #4, with #5 next and #6 also OK. Oddly, #2 where Woody and Ward R. sat had virtually nothing.

In the #5 double Hal and I had occasional shots all morning. We should have had a few more birds but on the whole we did pretty well with the chances we had. By far the majority of the birds flying were sprigs- big bunches of teal and spoonies we saw a week ago were not in evidence. Spectacular show of snow geese. They spent the night on Gilmore and milled around in great long skeins during the early morning. Eight geese were killed on the ranch today, mostly on Mound Farm.

When Hal cleaned the ducks he found crops full of a teeny black seed - no corn at all. I don't quite understand this since a week ago birds were full of corn and today I saw a bunch of sprigs all with mud balls on their feet as though they had been foraging in the fields.

Had a good pheasant hunt after lunch. Most of our birds are in the brush & timber along the big canal at our SE corner.

Little Joe served baked striped bass for dinner - great!

BH 4 coch sprigs

Hal 1 sprig
1 g.w. teal

Sorenson

Jan. 16, 1977

I had first choice and got Hal in #4. It was a good decision for he had plenty of action, as Norm did yesterday. However, Hal had trouble hitting them and came home pretty despondent. His gun stock is much too short.

I had a very pleasant morning in #5, pulling down some pretty high birds. Didn't miss anything close but I only had one close shot, at a single — no chances for doubles.

Jed took a limit out of #6 by 11 AM. Little Joe and a guest had practically no shooting in #2. The overall flight today was virtually equal to yesterday. It was still going strong at noon when we quit.

There were lots of geese in the air again today — not so many snows but more honkers. Very few specs. A beautiful little male cinnamon teal was tooling around over south end off and on for an hour. He passed me once at 20 feet! Some big bunches of green-wings but reduced number of shovelers. Not many widgeon either. Still a few snipe left on our marsh but not enough for a hunt.

A prairie falcon flew south over our place — low and just coasting along, not hunting.

21 hunters on route home. Woody got only 16 on Wednesday Jan 12.

3 sprigs

Sorenson

Jan 22, 1977

High clouds and no wind. There were skeins upon skeins of waterfowl in the air for several hours, dominated by snow geese — they made the most noise anyway. But also big mobs of sprigs and of widgeon. At one point in the morning at least 1000 sprigs were funnelling into our pond - absolutely breath-taking sight. I aimed at a big cock right over me and couldn't bring myself to shoot and spoil the show. So I sat down. On several other occasions groups of hundreds of widgeons would pour in. It was quite a show.

In #6 I had only a few shots but I didn't much care about killing a big string. Flight was best over #2 and #4. Good to have #4 blind come to life - it has been pretty slow this fall.

Both ducks and geese have taken to roosting up in pastures rather than ponds. Fri. evening before dark we saw big widgeon mobs flying in tight formation (like blackbirds) and alighting in the pasture just east of the club house. Geese seem to prefer pastures west of the high lines and power line. Lots of honkers, in addition to snows. Some Ross geese mixed in with nearly every flock of snows.

I cooked a big stew Friday evening. We picked up decoys all Saturday afternoon.

4 sprigs
1 drake mallard

Sorenson
Jan 23, 1977

Last day of the season. Clear sky but there were local pockets of fog, two of which moved slowly over us an hour apart. No action when we were enveloped, and in fact there was a very light flight on our ground. Some big widgeon rafts came in but not many sprigs. In #2 I shot phenomenally well — 5 birds with 6 shells — all long shots too. One nice double on cock sprigs. But the other boys hardly shot at all.

The sky show was dominated again by snow geese followed by sprig and widgeon. Relatively few shovelers or teal. I did see a pair of cinnamon teal and Jason saw a little bunch of 5. Are they coming back in, ready to breed?

A few birds are starting to die of fowl cholera — coots and ruddy ducks on our pond, but some geese on Gilmore and Sorenson. Ulmers started to drain the ponds after lunch today to scatter the birds elsewhere.

After lunch we finished picking up the stick-up decoys and stripping the barrels of stools, floor boards etc. Then buttoned down things in the hatches. I gave out before the job was done and started home — just barely made it.

4 Valsz pheasants

Sorensons

Jan 30, 1977

Big communal picnic ad pheasant hunt today - Lum Leopolds, Middlekauffs, Degnardens, Healys and BS Leopolds. We chased birds up and down ditches ad sloughs ad came out finally with 8 of them. Barb L. made a nice overhead shot on a big wild cock ad Carrie hit a bird hard but it flew 200 yds ad lost itself in a dense rose thicket along the SE canal. But everyone had some action and a good time.

All duck ponds are drained but there are still a lot of ducks, ad a few hunters, hanging around the property. Ponds to the north of us are not drained ad they are stuffed with ducks. Some big mobs of widgeon milling around over the pastures like flocks of blackbirds. A prairie falcon came right over me as we drove a ditch W of the hot corner.

Built a bonfire and had lunch at the timber "ex-pond". As we arrived, Woody found a poor Mexican worker with his hand half severed in a machine, and stuck there. Woody freed him and rushed him to headquarters where he was driven to the hospital in Dixon.

Coming in via the "scenic route" we counted 23 kestrels. Dennis got 24. I don't know what to make of the increase.

A. Starker Leopold

Date	Blind	Pintail	Mallard	Widgeon	Teal	Other ducks	Total ducks	Geese	Jacksnipe	Pheasant	Notes Guest
Oct. 23, 1976	#2	7					7				
Oct 24	6	4					4				Betty - 2 spring
Oct 27	5	7					7			2	with 8 shells
Oct 30	2	3	1				4			4	Ken Morrison 1 spring FOG
Nov 3	6	5					5			4	McPeek 7 spring
Nov 10	2	5					5			1	6 shells
Nov 13	5	2					2				FOG again
Nov 14	5	-	1				1				EWL - rain
Nov 20	2	6					6				
Nov 24	5	3					3		4		
Nov 27	4	5	1				6		8	2	Big N wind Luna - 2 spring, 5 snipe
Nov 28	2	4					4				Luna - 2 spring, 4 snipe
Dec 4	5	-			2		2		8	5	
Dec 5	6	2					2				NE wind till 8:30
Dec 11	6	2					2		8		Fog!
Dec 15	4	6					6		8		Early fog (1 hour)
Dec 18	6	6					6		8	2	with Ray Barrett
Dec 19	5	-					0				Skunked!
Dec 28	2	4					4		6		Clear, calm
Jan 5, '77	6	1					1				Cloudy, calm
Jan 8	6	4					4			1	Clear, cold, N breeze
Jan 15	5	4					4			3	Hal S. ~~got~~ 3 spring also
Jan 16	5	4					4				Light fog
Jan 22	6	3					3				High clouds, N breeze
Jan 23	2	4	1				5				Clear, warm, some fog
							97		50		

Banded Birds

Date	Bird	Band no.	Where bulled	When banded
10/21/67	♂ pintail	716-50513	Sorenson #5	Alta, Ontario 8/8/67
1/10/71	♀ widgeon	698-35784	#2 double	Brosseau, Alta 8/3/64
1/1/72	Canada goose	578-60560	"	Big Sage Res Cal 6/19/66
11/1/72	Pintail ♀	756-55588	"	Klamath 9/13/72
10/26/74	Pintail ♂	746-95400	"	Gray Lodge 9/22/72
10/30/74	Pintail ♂	826-39294	"	Pollockville, Alta 8/21/74

13-8855